

BEIJING TODAY

北京青年报

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

August 13 2010 - August 19 2010

NO. 479 CN11-0120

HTTP://WWW.BEIJINGTODAY.COM.CN

CHIEF EDITOR:
JIAN RONG
NEWS EDITOR:
YU SHANSHAN
DESIGNER:
YANG GEN

Designs from
Taiwan in town

Page 16



北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Pages 12-13 When man and city meet

Artists from Berlin explore the changing relationship between man and city in the Internet era.



Pages 20-21 Liancheng's rich history

Journey to China's Xanadu, home of Hakka architecture and roofed bridges.

Gone are the days



CFP Photo

Those who have never been to China probably believe what they learned in grade school. But the Chinese capital is home to 9 million bicycles no more. Even the extensive rental program, the darling of the city during the Olympics, is crumbling as unused two-wheelers are reclaimed by nature. Beijingers' scramble to acquire cars and status – environment be damned – has left the government nostalgic for the good old days when the city wasn't being choked by car exhaust.

Read more on Page 4

Free 'school'
for migrants
closed again

Page 3

Grads shun
foreign firms
for stability

Page 6

New debate
over forced
old exercises

Page 7

Filipino maids
welcomed
by all but gov

Page 10

Under the auspices of the Information Office of Beijing Municipal Government ■ Run by Beijing Youth Daily ■ President: Zhang Yanping ■ Editor in Chief: Zhang Yabin ■ Executive Deputy Editor in Chief: He Pingping ■ Director: Jian Rong ■ Price: 2 yuan per issue ■ 26 yuan for 3 months ■ Address: No.23, Building A, Bajiazhuan Dongli, Chaoyang District, Beijing, China ■ Zip Code: 100026 ■ Telephone/Fax: (010) 65902525 ■ E-mail: bjtoday@ynet.com ■ Hotline for subscription: (010) 67756666 (Chinese), (010) 65902626 (English) ■ Overseas Code Number: D1545 ■ Postage Code: 1-364 ■ Overseas Distribution Agent: China International Book Trading Corporation

Industrial polluters given two months to close

Industry chiefs have warned more than 2,000 companies to close obsolete production facilities within two months or face cuts in credit and a suspension of government approval.

The Ministry of Industry and Information Technology set the end of September as the deadline for firms to shut down outdated facilities in a move to cut overcapacity and raise the level of economic growth.

The government order involves 2,087 companies, according to a document released Sunday by the ministry.

The order affects 18 industries: iron, steel, coke, iron alloys, calcium carbide, electrolytic aluminium, copper smelting, lead smelting, zinc smelting, cement, paper-making, glass, ethanol, monosodium glutamate, citric acid, leather-making, printing and dyeing and chemical fibers.

The cement, paper-making and iron sectors had the most numbers of companies ordered to close outdated energy-consuming and polluting capacities.

Liuzhou Iron and Steel, according to the government decree, would need to slash 2 mil-

lion tons of outdated iron-making capacity while 762 cement companies were also targeted.

Companies that fail to do so before the deadline will have their waste discharge licenses revoked, said Li Yizhong, minister of Industry and Information Technology.

Bank loans and new project approvals from the government will not be provided to those companies who fail to clean up, Li said.

Failing companies will not be allowed to appeal to land management authorities for more

new land for their projects and their production licenses will also be recalled by relevant authorities, Li said.

Companies could face possible power cuts from suppliers if they fail the mission, he said.

"Outdated capacities consume energy, pollute the environment and are safety risks. They reflect the very crude and quantitative mode of economic growth," Li said.

"They are also the causes of the low quality, inefficiency and weak competitiveness in our national economic develop-

ment," he said.

He said only by speeding up elimination of outdated capacity would the country be able to upgrade its industrial structure and improve international competitiveness.

The government has set a target to improve energy efficiency by 20 percent from 2005 levels by the end of the year.

Energy use per unit of economic output fell by 15.7 percent at the end of last year, and the government is facing heavy pressure to hit its goal.

(Xinhua)

Foreign volunteers to get permanent ID cards



Foreign volunteers working in the capital will soon be granted permanent volunteer ID cards by the government.

CFP Photo

By Chu Meng

Chinese and foreign volunteers working in the capital will soon be issued permanent volunteer ID cards by Beijing Volunteers Federation.

The change, coming in October, is the first government-level channel that would grant volunteer status to a wide range of international applicants.

The regulation is an answer to the capital's soaring demand for volunteers and to channel its excess of willing volunteers to channels most in need, the government said Monday.

The federation's official website at bv2008.cn will open registration during the National Day holiday.

"In the past, all levels of organizations including government bodies, large-scale event committees and grassroots NGOs, had to handle their own volunteer recruitment. There was never any management or supervision from above," said Hao Gang, the federation's director of membership.

The 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games and other large-scale local events and the rise of NGOs spurred many Chinese and foreign residents to seek out opportunities to lend their skills.

But many became disheartened when they failed to find an organization that could make use of their professional skills, interests and schedule.

Foreign volunteers received exceptionally limited access to NGO recruitment information — most who found a volunteer opportunity heard about it from a friend.

But the government says things are changing.

"The federation plans to use its website like a job hunting platform. Organizations in need will be able to publish their recruitment information on the federation's website, and anyone in the public, from any country, can register with us to be a volunteer," Hao said.

Volunteers who register will be given a certificate and a number.

The certificate is valid lifelong, and each volunteer will receive a unique number. Volunteers will receive between one and five stars depending on how many hours they volunteer. Stars are arranged in tiers from 100 to 5,000 hours.

Experts said the new system will be far more effective than former event-based recruitment drives.

"If Beijing held an event like Shanghai Expo, this database of volunteer ID numbers and membership data would give the government a clear sense of how many volunteers it has and how many it needs to track down," said Zhang Yi, an official at the China Communist Youth League Beijing Committee, the biggest volunteer management body in Beijing.

The federation is currently managing volunteers for 167 organizations, including medical aid NGOs, senior care and positions at the UN Volunteer's Beijing Office.

As many as 50,000 openings for volunteers are listed on the website.

City submits Olympic and Paralympic reports, promotes sports

By Zhao Hongyi

The Beijing Olympic City Development Association (BODA) released its reports on the Olympic and Paralympic games last Sunday — the second anniversary of the opening of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

The reports, published in Chinese, English and French, recalled the experience of hosting the two games and collected relevant original documents, moments and records.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) requires host cities like Beijing to submit the reports within two years of hosting the Games.

"The reason it took us two years to finish is because we wanted to present detailed, useful reports that would benefit future host cities," said Xu Da, an author of the reports and former deputy director of public relations for the Beijing Olympic organizing committee.

"We were particularly prepared for the Paralympics because we believed it was a chance to be part of a global push to bring sports to the dis-

abled," Xu said.

Since the Paralympic torch went out, the city has conducted numerous renovations to the National Stadium and launched a series of boy and girl mascots to promote the stadium. It has also hosted several international events, like a soccer match between the Barcelona soccer team and Beijing Guo'an.

The National Swimming Center, or Water Cube, opened as a much-needed public swimming pool after extensive preparation.

The two structures have welcomed 13 million and 4.5 million visitors respectively since the games ended, making the venues some of the city's most popular scenic spots.

Construction is also underway for a new Olympic Games Museum south of the Bird's Nest, which would open in the first quarter of next year.

BODA was founded in 2009, when the organizing committee was dissolved. Its mission is to spread the Olympic spirit and continue relevant works in the city.

Tourism the Olympic legacy

Since the Games, August 8 through September 6 has become the city's "month-long" Olympic City Sports Cultural Festival, an event dedicated to promoting the Olympic spirit, sports and tourism.

As part of that mission, the municipal government has allocated 10 million yuan to encourage individuals to develop high-end tourism projects, combining eco-friendly science, entertainment and business together.

Tourism is fast becoming the largest source of jobs in Beijing, with employment in the sector reaching 340,000. As many as 1.7 million people work in jobs indirectly dependent on the tourism industry.

At the 2nd Beijing Olymp-

ic City Development Forum held last Sunday, Zhang Hui-guang, director of Beijing Tourism Bureau, said the municipal government had invested 222.5 billion yuan in 505 tourist projects that would further strengthen the industry while promoting environmental protection and sustainable growth.

The 134 projects currently under construction are valued at 65 billion yuan.

In the years since the Games, the city has played host to 2,000 exhibitions and conferences, 140 of which were international, bringing in many tourists and generating more than 54 billion yuan in indirect income, the director said.

New hope for migrants' preschool

By Annie Wei

Being a parent on an average salary is tough in Beijing. Education fees become a burden starting from kindergarten, and rarely do they become any easier to bear.

Public schools require a child to have *hukou* in their jurisdiction, and private schools are incredibly expensive.

In a city that is home to 5 million migrants, many educators, volunteers and parents are scrambling to find a feasible kindergarten model for migrant children.



Children from Sihuan market are happy to have a new safe place to play and learn.



Photo by Yuan Yi

Shut down again

Sihuan Game Group, which provides a volunteer-supported preschool to migrant children, has been through some ups and downs.

This week was one of its biggest downs yet: Sihuan's latest attempt at a free kindergarten was crushed only days after opening.

The group had been hosting educational activities at the Sihuan market for six years, but was forced to close May 5 when the government implemented new security regulations after a series of school murders around the country.

At the end of July, the group found a new location only 10 minutes from the market.

The new location, opposite the Jishuitan Chinese Traditional Medicine Hospital and beside a public toilet, was a five-room courtyard. After cleaning it up and remodeling, the school opened to 20 children and 10 parents.

Using a 50,000-yuan endowment donated by Ren Chunguang, principal of Beijing Chunguang Language School, it re-opened at the new location Monday.

But the group was immediately reported to the *jiedao*, the local residen-

tial committee, by neighbors for "being disturbing."

Police quickly arrived and told the group to keep their voices down and that they would take care of the neighbors.

At lunch, the police came again to ask who was in charge of fire alarms and safety issues. The volunteers said they would handle the paperwork as soon as possible.

Tuesday afternoon, the residential administration came and ordered the group to shut down, citing its lack of proper license.

It was the fourth shutdown in six years.

Sihuan Game Group

While commonly referred to as a "school," Sihuan is not yet registered as a kindergarten or an NGO.

In 2004, Zhang Yan, a professor at Beijing Normal University, took her students to the Sihuan Grocery Market for a research project.

Students asked vendors if they thought a kindergarten was necessary and what they expected of their children's preschool education.

The researchers learned that many of the vendors had already settled in the city and were desperate for a place where their children could be cared for.

Zhang became convinced of the need to give migrant children access to early education.

Beijing has at least 1,000 markets like Sihuan, and each has several dozen migrant children younger than 7 years old. There are even more of these children in the suburbs.

Zhang called on her students to found Sihuan Game Group, which would serve as a place for students pursuing careers in preschool education to serve an internship while the researchers worked on a solution to educating the children.

For six years, volunteers went to the

market every day it was open, including weekends.

"You cannot imagine what the kids at the market were like six years ago," said Wang Jingyan, 70, a local Beijinger who lives nearby. Wang said the children ran around the market like they thought they were in the countryside, and many were hit by trucks.

Wang said the lack of supervision and preschool education would be serious barriers that could keep them out of primary school.

"They were so wild," she said. "No teachers in primary schools would have the energy to deal with them."

Parental acceptance

The group has achieved much in the last six years.

When it started, the market's management told the students to conduct their activities in the market's yard, expecting them to get bored and give up on the project.

Today, more than 400 children have "graduated" and the feedback from primary schools has been good.

Parents banded together and pitched

in 20 yuan per month to support the group. Moved by their dedication, the market's managers gave the students an empty warehouse to use as a classroom and donated several hundred yuan at the end of the year as encouragement.

Zhang said he hopes the pre-education can continue for the migrant community. The group provides general education that teaches children about the importance of science and family, she said.

Many parents have taken an active role in supporting the program.

Xiao Jinsheng, a father from Fujian Province with a four-year-old daughter, was on duty to assist the group Tuesday morning. He helped to keep an eye on the children and stood watch at the gate.

Xiao said he volunteered two or three times per month. "It doesn't affect my business in the market too much, and I think the 'school' does my child good," he said.

Open, but for how long?

Even before it was evicted from the market due to safety concerns, the group was shut down twice when its students had an outbreak of hand-foot-mouth disease and flu.

Tuesday's shutdown came because the group never registered as an organization and did not exist as a legal entity. It also failed to hire a security agent, the neighborhood administration said.

While it acknowledged that the group helped the community, the administration pledged to oppose the group's presence until it has filed all the necessary paperwork.

The latest eviction worried many parents at the market.

One father, Zhao Mingliang said throwing the children back on the street or locking them up at home would expose them to dangers again.

Huang Rong, a mother with a four-and-a-half-year-old, said she is out of options for where to send her daughter. Both she and her husband have stands at the market, and when her husband is off filling orders she has to be there to watch the business.

She said Sihuan Game Group helped her daughter learn manners and keep clean. Since its closure she has been looking for a registered kindergarten, but the only options are private schools that cost 2,000 to 3,000 yuan per month.

She finally found a kindergarten that cost 700 yuan per month, but said its conditions were atrocious. She said she had heard people refer to it as a "black kindergarten," which made her very suspicious about the education it offered.

For the time being, it appears that the volunteers' persistence has softened the neighborhood administration. It is being allowed to continue its activities on the condition that it promptly finishes the necessary paperwork.

Li Xiangyu, a graduate student at Beijing Normal University and mother, said the group has been searching since Thursday for a government body willing to help it register as an NGO.

"However, it's very hard to find a company or an organization that will help us because no one wants to take joint responsibility," Li said.

If the search fails, the volunteers may be left with one other option: to use the same backdoor as most Chinese NGOs and register as a company.

Lost kingdom of bicycles

Revival of pedaling power faces dilemma

By Huang Daohen

Twenty years ago, four out of five Beijingers pedaled around the city on some of the world's best bicycle lanes. It was a "kingdom of bicycles."

Today is different as lanes are repainted for four-wheel traffic and the bicycle fleet is being abandoned for private cars.

Is the capital ready to become a new kingdom of 4 million cars? Probably not. Cars are increasing air pollution, traffic congestion and parking problems, and the government is finally starting to miss the good old days.

Several new policies aimed at reviving cycling are being pushed through, and the government hopes to have 1,000 bicycle rental booths around the city with 50,000 bicycles by 2015.

But privately-owned rental companies are cautiously optimistic: Many have invested millions since 2008 but are now struggling to survive.



The capital's bicycle renting businesses are facing a crisis.

CFP Photos

Back to bicycling

At 6:45 every morning, Li Rui pedals 15 minutes from his home in northern Tiantongyuan to the nearest subway station. He parks his rented bike at the nearby rental booth and takes the subway for the next 45 minutes to reach his office.

Li, 29, an IT engineer at an overseas-funded company near the China World Trade Center, used to sit comfortably behind the wheel of his car every day.

Since July 2008, when the government started to regulate driving days, Li, like hundreds of thousands of his fellow drivers, has been forced to bicycle on his off days.

During the Olympics, private cars were only allowed on road when their license plates matched an even or odd day. Li's car has an odd number plate, so he joined the streams of cyclists on even number days.

"At the first I had a really hard time adjusting to life without a car, but now I'm used to cycling," Li says.

"When I bike along an avenue there is a soft breeze. I can see so much more and get much-needed

exercise. I actually enjoy it now," Li says.

Struggling rental business

But recently, one thing has bothered Li: there are fewer and fewer people choosing to cycle to the subway.

"If this continues, I'm afraid the rental booths will all end up closed," Li says. Li rents bicycles using a yearly rental card with a 400-yuan deposit.

Li's worries are reasonable: the capital's bicycle rental businesses are facing a crisis.

At a rental booth near the Gulou subway station on a sunny Wednesday afternoon, dozens of bikes sit chained together through their tires. After months under direct sunlight, the bikes are rusted and their seats are cracking.

"Do you want to rent a bike?" the rental agent surnamed Zhao says.

Were it not for his call, the rental stand would be easy to miss. Its only sign is obscured under the eaves of a building.

"The deposit is 300 to 400 yuan depending on the bicycle.

Rental fees vary by time. For 4 hours it is 20 yuan, and for 24 hours it is 40 yuan," Zhao says, leaning out of the window.

Zhao says his booth is a branch of Bike Rental Company, one of the city's major agencies running bicycle rental business. But most days, Zhao fails to rent out even one bicycle.

"The business is difficult especially in big cities like Beijing," Zhao says. "It takes half an hour to ride to Houhai, but it takes only 10 minutes by bus."

The other problem is that most people are unwilling to part with 400 yuan – even if it is only for a deposit. They would prefer to use the same money to purchase a better-quality new bike, he says.

Wednesday was no exception for Zhao. During the half hour this reporter spent at his rental booth, not one person came up to rent a bicycle.

"If you don't have enough money, we can negotiate on the price," Zhao says.

According to a notice on the website of the Bike Rental Company, 46 rental booths have been suspended, including once popular stations in the crowded Sihui and Dongdan areas.

"We are struggling to keep afloat," says Bai Xuying, sales director of Bike Rental. "The company's turnover was in the red last month."

Since 2008, the company has invested more than 30 million yuan. There were once more than 100 rental booths with 8,000 bicycles, Bai says. But with all of the profits going to pay employees, Bike Rental found itself unable to stay profitable. Its once grand fleet has fallen to 4,000 bicycles at 20 booths.

Like Bike Rental, other private companies are also feeling



Rental bikes are being reclaimed by nature in Wangjing area.

the pinch. At the end of 2009, the competing Bikekingdom Rental, Bird of Freedom Bicycle Rental and Fangzhou Bike Service were all running in the red.

Lack of government support

Though going through hard times, the rental companies believe conditions will improve.

"In the long term, bicycle rental may be profitable," Bai says. "Cycling can solve a lot of the city's problems, and would go a long way in the fight against traffic congestion and pollution."

The Beijing municipal government thought the same. Early this month, the government announced its Green Action Plan, which hopes to make more bikes available for rent. The plan aims to have a network of 500 bike rental booths and 20,000 bikes by 2012, and then 1,000 booths with 50,000 by 2015.

The city's transport authorities say the capital will build more bicycle lanes and more self-service bicycle centers across the city to encourage cycling.

Many of the new bicycle rental

booths would be opened along the newly opened subway lines.

But the plan did not provide details on how the government would achieve this.

"For now, [the government's plan] remains just a plan. The government has not announced any concrete measures to help rental firms," Bai says.

Foreign cities with successful bicycle rental programs have only succeeded with government support, he said. The Velib scheme in Paris, for example, is funded by French tax payers.

In China, the most successful bike rental scheme so far seems to be one in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. The city now has 1,000 bicycle rental booths offering 20,000 bikes for rent.

Chen Guangcun, a teacher at Zhejiang University, says people can rent the bicycles using the IC transportation card with no deposit, and that the first hour of rental is free.

"If the bike is not returned on time, money is deducted from the card," Chen said. "The procedure is simple and people really love to rent bikes here."



A rental agent works at his booth near Gulou subway station.

Soft is the new hard

Govt uses celeb film ad to boost China's image

China presented itself through a 15-minute video that showed the nation is well on its way to ushering in an era of prosperity. But more than anything else, many believe real soft power lies in the well-being of a country's culture and people.



Basketball star Yao Ming, movie director John Woo and piano prodigy Lang Lang are among dozens of celebrities who will appear in television commercials. CFP Photo

China has hired a New York advertising agency to create promotional commercials starring celebrities such as basketball star Yao Ming and pianist Lang Lang in a bid to boost its image abroad.

The State Council Information Office said it commissioned an "internationally renowned advertising company" to shoot two commercials – a 30-second TV spot and an extended 15-minute film – for its embassies.

"The film is aimed at boosting

and raising China's image as prosperous, developing, democratic, progressive," it said in a statement.

The campaign comes after a 28-country poll commissioned by the BBC last year showed that only 39 percent of respondents had a positive view of China, *China Daily* reported.

China's fall in global opinion was partly due to the unrest that erupted in Tibet in 2008, the newspaper said.

The Shanghai office of Lintas,

one of the world's oldest ad agencies founded in 1899, confirmed it had been awarded the campaign. In China, the firm is known for its Chinese-language ads for Audi and China Mobile.

"It will be difficult compared with ads for a particular product," Wang Lijun, the assistant to the company's president, told AFP.

"There is no ad that could be bigger than a national publicity film. It will be a breakthrough for our business."

The advertisements will mark a departure from previous state-produced propaganda spots, such as those connected with the Beijing Olympics in 2008 and this year's World Expo in Shanghai, she said.

"In the past, national publicity films would cover very broad issues. They were based on China's overall development. But our angle is more human-oriented," Wang said.

The descriptions of the campaign in state media say it will involve a similar cast of celebrities

as in the Olympics and Expo campaigns, such as Yao, who have become modern stand-ins for communist role models of the past.

The campaign will feature some new capitalist additions, including Hong Kong property tycoon Li Ka-shing and Internet entrepreneur and 163.com founder Ding Lei, according to Xinhua.

Work on the ads has begun and they are expected to debut around October 1, China's national holiday, reports said. (Agencies)

Analysis inside

Corruption, counterfeit hurt China's global image

What hurts the country's international image most? A survey conducted by the Horizon Research Consultancy Group said corruption tops the blots, followed by counterfeiting, shoddy goods and pollution.

The telephone survey polled 1,350 people in five major cities,

including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan and Chongqing last December. More than 59 percent of respondents think corruption among government officials hurts the nation's image the most.

About 44 percent of the interviewees ranked counterfeit and

shoddy products as a major problem area. It was followed by pollution, uncivil conduct and industrial accidents, the poll said.

It was the third consecutive year people picked corruption as the biggest blemish on the country's reputation, Horizon Research reported.

The survey indicated that ordinary people tend to look at the country's international image from a domestic perspective. Shi Yinhong, an expert on international studies at Beijing's Renmin University of China, was quoted by *China Daily* as saying.

Shi said corruption has been

severely criticized in both Chinese and foreign media, but he did not think it was the most serious factor hurting China's international image.

"People chose corruption as the biggest problem mainly because they feel resentful about it," he said. (By Huang Daohen)

The third eye

How to improve the country's soft power?

By Huang Daohen

China has made huge progress in its global image, said Dennis Zhao, a Chinese visiting scholar at Michigan State University (MSU). Zhao, specializing in international communications, now also teaches Chinese to MSU students.

Living in the US for over three years, Zhao said he can tell the difference. "At least, no one will ask, 'Are you Japanese?' on the street," he said.

For a long time, Zhao said the

Chinese government attempted to build its image by asking domestic media to promote its achievements.

"But the outcome was always the opposite of the one intended, as most Western media still focused on China's dark side and the government's wrongdoings," he said.

Now, as the country becomes more open, Zhao said the government has changed its attitude of self-promotion.

The central government has

worked with PR companies to boost its image while local governments have begun using spokespeople to address public relations problems.

Zhao said the new film ad to be broadcast on CNN will help in this respect, but that should not be the whole story.

"The government and the public should not overestimate the impact of the commercial ad," Zhao said. "I think the only way to accelerate the process of real cultural

engagement with China for many in the West is through contact with Chinese soft power in the form of products and culture."

Using Japan as an example, Zhao said many Americans have a positive image of Japan because they've been exposed to the country's entertainment, fashion and automobiles.

"It is these kinds of things that finally lead people to further educate themselves about the places they're interested in," Zhao said.

It is the same for the US, Zhao said. Though the US government also pumps money into its domestic media like Voice of America to promote their country abroad, in the end, it is *Avatar* and *Friends* that have done more to boost the US's image, he said.

China's positive image cannot only depend on a TV commercial. Instead, it must be built on the well-being of all its people, Zhao said.

Foreign companies less popular

Grads pick state-owned employers



Alibaba chief executive officer Jack Ma speaks during a job fair in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. Many graduates cite Ma as their inspiration for joining Alibaba.

IC Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

State enterprises have overtaken foreign and private enterprises as the top destination for job-seeking graduates this year, according to the 2010 annual survey of 200,000 students conducted by ChinaHR.com.

Among the Top 10 employers named, eight were state-owned. Foreign companies made up 21 of the 50 best employers in last year's poll.

Some 34 percent surveyed choose state enterprises, 23 percent preferred foreign enterprises and 18 percent choose joint ventures.

Many students had gloomy expectations for private employers or jobs with NGOs. Only a quarter of the surveyed students chose these employers.

The number of students choosing state enterprises has been increasing over the years from 17.9 percent in 2007 to 23.1 percent and 34.1 percent this year," Ouyang Hui, researching

director of ChinaHR.com, said.

"The number choosing foreign enterprises, joint ventures and private enterprises has been dropping," he said.

The reason is the stable employment state enterprises provide, and their full coverage of welfare, he said. With the world economy still in turmoil, other enterprises are downsizing their recruitment plans and cutting jobs.

State-owned enterprises are forming standard management and recruitment systems, improving their market performance and revenue, and that means there may be a chance for big salary increases down the road," Ouyang said.

That access to new talent has enabled Chinese enterprises to explore the world market, according to a report by *Wall Street Journal*. The Shenzhen-based Huawei is playing an increasingly large part in the world telecommunication industry due in part to access to new local talent, the

report said.

Yang Sulin, an engineering graduate, stayed at a foreign company for nine months before shifting to a job at the state-owned China Aviation Procurement.

"The competition in foreign companies is fierce and changes are frequent," Yang said. "You don't know what will happen tomorrow or the next year."

Yang was laid off when his company downsized its China business.

"State enterprises are more reliable and stable even though workloads are increasing," he said, "but I enjoy all the welfares and like the job experience."

Of students polled, only 55 percent said they would look for a job - 89 percent planned to look for a job last year. Only 1.8 percent said they would study abroad.

"The percentage of students choosing work as the first option has been increasing since 2003 and the number choosing to continue their education either

at home or abroad has been decreasing," according to Ouyang. "This tells us that students are becoming more rational in their approach to higher education overseas."

Facing a tough job market,

students are desperate for work. In 2003, 15 percent planned to start a business, but only 1.4 percent intended to this year despite government appeals to the contrary and generous subsidies for start-ups.

Top graduate employers of 2010

Company	2010	2009	Changes
China Mobile	1	1	-
Alibaba	2	9	+7
Haier	3	3	-
Microsoft	4	11	+7
Bank of China	5	5	-
Google	6	6	-
Lenovo	7	8	+1
Procter & Gamble	8	2	+6
ICBC	9	20	+11
China Telecom	10	13	+3

Source: ChinaHR.com

Hotel Duxiana comes to hutong

By Zhang Dongya

Swedish hotel Duxiana, a branch of Swedish bed-producer Dux, opened its first Beijing location in Shijia Hutong, Dongcheng District last Sunday.

"Dux beds have won the support of Shanghai and Beijing's elite, which has given us confidence that this arm of our brand will succeed here," said Kong Tao, the general manager of Dux

in China.

Duxiana has 40 rooms in Beijing, each equipped with a Dux bed. The cost of a suite ranges from 1,880 to 3,980 yuan.

"Most hotels pay attention to the customers' visual enjoyment, but Duxiana values comfort the most. We use Dux beds so all visitors can experience the quality of our finest product," Kong said.

Duxiana has a franchise to sell Dux beds. Lodgers who are satisfied with the beds can buy one directly at a preferential price.

The hutong location was selected to give the hotel a closer connection to Chinese culture. Its design is inspired by the traditional courtyard, and all furniture and decorations adhere to Chinese style.

Dux beds are owned by

many international celebrities including David Beckham and Madonna, and now are a top choice for China's rich. The most popular model in China is the Dux 8888, which costs 156,000 yuan.

Founded by the Ljung family in Sweden in 1926, Dux specializes in upholstered furniture and beddings. Its beds feature spring coils made from Swed-

ish steel, which is flexible and allows the bed to adapt to the user's body shape.

Duxiana is used as the brand's special shop, and its first location outside Sweden was opened in Shanghai in 2005.

The bed giant has eight hotel stores on the mainland, including several locations in Beijing, Hangzhou, Kunming and Shenzhen.

Radio exercises result in controversy

By Zhao Hongyi

On August 8, the second anniversary of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, Beijing Municipal Federation of Workers' Unions appealed for 4 million municipal government officials and workers to resume their "public gymnastics exercises" dropped in 2007 in the lead-up to the Olympics.

The federation appealed together with the Municipal Bureau of Sports and Municipal

Bureau of Public Health. The resumption of the exercises began the following day.

The rhythm for these eight-minute public exercises will be broadcast every day at 10 am and 3 pm on 102.5 FM, the Beijing sports radio frequency.

The notice issued by the three municipal government agencies say the exercises must be implemented for state employees but are optional for employees of private and for-

ign enterprises.

The worker's union purchased CDs and posters and invited teachers from Beijing Sports University to demonstrate moves involved in these exercises.

Chaoyang authorities also said they would call on foreign companies and representative offices in the district's CBD area to practice the radio exercise.

But he policy is facing implementation problems.

Due to Beijing's traffic prob-

lems, many offices and agencies are adopting flexible working hours, with differing start times.

"We start work at 9 am," said Hu Qingshen, an officer of the Donghu Community Committee in Dongcheng District. "Therefore, we've moved the afternoon exercises to 3 pm."

Those who made the original proposal have called upon people to adopt flexible exercise times and change the format of the proceedings.

The Great Wall Properties Management Company in the Boya Building in Wangjing made a set of exercises themselves, which they do at 3 pm every day.

"We start work at 9 am, so there's no need to do the exercises at 10 am," said Lai Guanli, an officer of the company.

The exercises are supposed to help prevent lumbar and spinal problems, especially for those who sit in offices all day.

Comment

Still useful

Today, people have many health problems, like obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes, but they forget to exercise. Therefore, these exercises are still useful today, even if they have other options like swimming, skating and ball sports. These exercises are easy to practice and more economical. We have designed many other exercises over the past decade suitable for white-collar workers, women and young people.

— Fan Yunjiang,
consultant, Municipal
Workers Sports Association

Keep the habit

In the early 1950s, life was hard and exercises played an important role in improving the health of the Chinese people. It is a good set of exercises. Today, people have more options for exercising, but it's important to remind the people to maintain the habit.

— Cong Mingli,
editor at People's Sports
Publishing House

It is outdated

People dropped the exercises in the 1980s and it was broadcast on the radio every day until 2007, even though it was

no longer popular. Why should we restart the practice under the government's call? It's just another example of the government wanting to control everything in our lives and giving orders here and there.

— yuriyuri, Netizen

Exercise makes a difference

I think it's a good idea to exercise during work hours, just as we have coffee or tea time. We should keep the habit. It will make a difference in years to come.

— Garay Rosenberg,
college student

Background

The tradition of radio exercising in China

The exercises were started in 1951 and have been revised eight times. Scenes of crowds doing public radio exercises were common until the 1980s. It helped improve public health during difficult times. Much of the Chinese population has a positive impression of it.

Around the same time, a set of eye exercises for preserving

vision became popular among students. These were conducted in the afternoon, while gymnastics exercises were done at 10 am.

Starting from the late 1980s, the government quit making these exercises compulsory. They remained only on campuses. With daily life improving, people believed they no longer needed

the exercises.

Still, sports authorities have designed dozens of new exercises for retirees, office workers, young women and students, targeting common health problems like obesity, high blood pressure, carpal tunnel syndrome and cervical spondylosis, said He Fengxiang, chief of the National Administration of Sports.



Participants do synchronized physical exercises during a campaign to promote the daily workout at the Imperial Ancestral Temple Monday.

IC Photo

Commercial match fails locals



Lionel Messi's napping during a press conference is said to be "rude."

Photo by Huang Liang

By Huang Daochen

Public napping, a lack of star players and poor match quality disappointed Beijing soccer fans who went to the Bird's Nest to see last Sunday night's friendly match between Barcelona and Beijing's Guo'an.

The Spanish champion finished its Asia tour with a 3-0 win over Guo'an. Argentine superstar Lionel Messi kept his promise and played

the entire first half, much more than his 17 minutes in Seoul last week.

Nevertheless, local fans complained that the event was marred by its exorbitant price of admission.

"Not many of my friends wanted to watch the game live," said Chen Jun, a local soccer fan.

Chen said he didn't have much confidence in the quality of such a commercialized game. Ticket prices ranged from 280 yuan to

2,880 yuan.

Recent years have seen more low-quality commercial matches as famous clubs look at China as a moneymaking opportunity. In 2003, Real Madrid played four matches in China and reportedly netted about \$13.3 million.

The Italian team Sampdoria became the first club to visit China when it came in 1994 and lost 4-2 to the Chinese national team.

Comment

Players have responsibility only to their club team

I think it's only the media that felt insulted by Barce's "rude behavior." Local soccer fans were actually happy and excited at the Bird's Nest last Sunday night.

Surely players like Messi must carry out their duties of smiling and shaking hands because of their tremendous salaries, but rather than being polite, their main role is to be fit and be the best when they play in Barcelona.

— Felix, engineer from Ireland working in Beijing

Double-edged sword

Commercial matches do not always benefit a club. During the Asia tour, Barca was forced to pay a \$265,000 penalty as Messi only played 17 minutes in Seoul. They paid another \$130,000 for the absence of midfielder Xavi. It is a double-edged sword that might hurt fans and the soccer team.

— Roberto Chen, editor with Xinhua news agency

It's about business

To say the least, the reigning Spanish champion was underwhelmed at the Bird's Nest. Messi did not run a lot. The pitch was also not that good. Anyway, you cannot expect a high quality competition from a commercial match. It is, after all, about business and marketing.

— Wang Jin, local soccer fan

Australian helps Water cube undergo magical makeover

By Chu Meng

Beijing's famous Olympic swimming venue, the National Aquatic Center, has been transformed into a world-class indoor water park. Last Sunday it opened to the public as the Happy Magic Watercube Waterpark.

Australian water theme park veteran Alan Mahony, 46, was hired on a three-year contract to be the general manager of the new water park. First he oversaw planning and construction. Now, as the person responsible for safety and quality at the attraction, he said he has been working 15 hours a day since the park's opening.

"The initial challenge was during the construction stage, ensuring that everything was to the quality expected; now that we have opened, the ongoing challenge is to ensure that we offer the safest services to all guests," he said.

One of the biggest current challenges is with the park's capacity. "On our first testing day, we had 2,000 visitors," Mahony said; the designed limit was 2,500 visitors.

The Water Cube is an internationally renowned architectural wonder. In the summer of 2008, viewers around the world watched as 25 swimming and diving world records were broken inside its three pools.

Yet from the very beginning, the venue was designed with both sports and recreational use in mind. While the immediate purpose was as a competitive swimming venue, over one-third of the 32,000-square-meter structure was earmarked for conversion to a water park.

Mahony has been involved in the theme park industry for 25 years. He began his career with the Warner Village Theme Park Group in Australia, where he managed



Alan Mahony, a 46-year-old Australian water park veteran, is working as the general manager of Beijing's Happy Magic Waterpark in the Water Cube.

the operations at Wet 'n' Wild Waterworld, Warner Bros. Movie World and Seaworld on the Gold Coast. For the last 15 years he has been managing numerous successful, leading and award-winning water parks in Asia.

"I was always a mad surfer being brought up on the beaches

of southern Sydney. Life as a young lad was hanging out at the beach and surfing all day with my buddies," Mahony said. "Working in a water park reminds me of my childhood."

With his experience working for top water parks around the world, Mahony has ideas about

how to turn a one-time Olympic venue into both a profit machine and a place for public leisure. "I believe it is necessary to utilize Olympic facilities after the Games, as it not only offers foreign visitors the chance to share the [Olympic] experience but also it gives locals a feeling of national pride."

Austrian artist's installation reflects need for free expression in city planning

By Liang Meilan

A spatial installation called *Blackboard: Beijing* by Austrian artist Karl-Heinz Klop will be on display at CU-Space Gallery in 798 through September 9. It challenges what we know about urbanization and how we think about urban Beijing.

Klop said the work was inspired by Beijing's rapid urbanization and its public spaces that no longer provide joy, but instead "hampers a city's livability." He aims to communicate, through his art, the possibility of free expression in city planning.

The main piece is a huge blackboard that divides the exhibition room into two spaces. On the front, names of places the artist has visited are diagrammed. "This is a work in progress. The initial sketch will be further developed during the course of the exhibition and visitors will be invited to add their related thoughts and



Karl-Heinz Klop with his work

comments," Klop said.

By creating such an installation, Klop wants to convey what is unusual about a city. He also wants to emphasize that big ideas in city planning don't have to come from big firms.

After speaking with many architects around town, he learned that there aren't many opportunities for young architects in small offices to realize their

ideas "because they are (trapped) in the hands of big investors," Klop said.

"The implication of the artwork for me is the freedom of expression in the city. That's the most important thing people should learn to demand through their way of living," he said.

For this 53-year-old artist and architectural consultant, the problem with modern cities – Beijing

in particular – is they are often not planned for the people who live in them. "You get the impression when you come in from the outside that this city is here mainly to make money," he said.

"There are very few public spaces for people to relax, and such places are important," Klop said.

Chu Fei, architect and owner of CU-Space, said Beijing's public spaces are being privatized, which is what happened in other developing countries. He gave an example that in the US, people have to pay to use restrooms in malls.

Klop's work has attracted the attention of city planners and architects. On August 21 at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, he will be a guest at an event that will bring together architects, artists, musicians and writers from Beijing. The theme will be: small gestures, big projects and the imaginary city. Information can be found on cu-space.com.



Fernando M. Reimers

Photo by Yu Xiao

Harvard professor offers advice to Chinese educators

By Li Zixin

Fernando M. Reimers, the Ford Foundation professor of international education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, said Beijing, as an emerging world city, should foster more global talent to support the country's development. He was in town last Sunday as part of the China International Forum of School Heads conference on the role of education in promoting innovation and talent.

Reimers said the city should provide students with more opportunities to come into contact with other cultures and languages so they can develop a global outlook.

"Global competency requires not only knowledge of the world, but also skills that can put that knowledge to use," he said.

The professor said the educational paradox at the beginning of this century is the disconnect between the superb institutional capacity of schools and their under performance in equipping students with the skills necessary to collaborate across national boundaries to invent and implement lasting solutions to global challenges.

"The most critical challenge that schools confront is preparing students with the skills and positive disposition toward cultural differences to invent a future that enhances human well-being in an age of globalization," he said.

Due to the complexity and sometimes controversial nature of global challenges – environmental issues, global trade, health epidemics and global poverty – Reimers said the response to these challenges is global education, which includes developing global values and building foreign-language skills.

"Preparing students to deal with such complexity and controversy and educating them to lead on behalf of meaningful global purposes should be at the heart of global education," he said.

Although educators worldwide still lack focus on global education, Reimers thinks China has an edge in the development of deep global competency because of its tradition of openness and tolerance.

"China was a very cosmopolitan nation. It was very interested in exchanging with other nations during many periods of its long history. I do think the roots of Chinese tradition give us a reason to be very hopeful that the country will give global education a priority," he said.

Filipino maids popular in Beijing despite legal issues



Two illegal Filipino maids in Hubei Province were deported after police discovered their illegal status.

By Han Manman

The number of Filipino maids has risen sharply in Beijing recently. Although they are not legally allowed to work in China, that has not deterred local expats and wealthy Chinese families from taking the risk of employing one.

More housekeeping agencies have started to develop this "under the table" business to take advantage of the lucrative market.

But without an effective system for supervision, experts warn that the local Filipino maid market may eventually spin out of control.



An experienced Filipino maid shares her home-service experience with local Chinese housekeepers. CFP Photos

Filipinos as perfect maids

"When I'm looking for a maid, I want someone who knows how to iron, separate whites from colored (clothes), beautify houses ... and most importantly, she must be well educated and speak good English to create an English environment for my 8-year-old daughter at home," said Chen Fengyu, a department manager who works for a US-based company.

The 38-year-old Chen is considering hiring a Filipino maid because of their "good reputation" worldwide.

"High quality is my first consideration, money is not a problem," Chen added.

Finding a Filipino maid is not difficult for Chen. She just searched "Filipino maid" online and found many choices.

"There are so many housekeeping agencies here, but I only considered big agencies to avoid swindlers," Chen said.

She said some agencies have already emailed her candidates and promised to arrange online interviews.

"They told me I could interview all the candidates until I found someone I was satisfied with, and they would soon arrange that person to come from the Philippines to work for me," Chen said.

One agency wanted to charge her 9,000 yuan for the procedure, including the maid's half-year visa fee, air ticket and commission, Chen said. This was on top of the maid's monthly salary of 3,500 yuan.

"That agency told me there is no risk in hiring a Filipino. The government loosened its control after the Beijing Olympics," Chen said.

"No domestic maid can match a Filipino," said Ma Yixuan, who employed a Filipino maid for years, adding that it's very worthwhile to employ a Filipino because they speak fluent English, are professional about chores and have a cheerful temperament and superior nanny skills.

Mecca of Filipino maids

As opposed to the mature Filipino maid markets in Hong Kong and Guangzhou, the market in Beijing was slow to get started.

According to a veteran in the household service industry who asked to be called Wang, Beijing's Filipino maid business began in 2000 and was met with a chilly reception.

Wang said high commissions, complicated procedures, differing cul-

tural backgrounds and communication barriers were the main barriers stopping Filipino maids from gaining a foothold in Beijing at that time.

"But people's concepts have changed over time," Wang said. "More local middle class families have become interested in Filipino maids."

Wang added that there are mainly three types of Chinese families willing to employ Filipino maids: those who want better household services; those who want their children to communicate with foreigners to improve their English

they come to Beijing and see their employer's luxury items and big houses, they immediately change their minds. As a result, many contact friends back home to tell them about the opportunities in Beijing.

"And the employers in Beijing are less picky than those in Hong Kong, which is another thing that appeals to the workers," Wang said.

Figures from the Philippines government last year show mainland China has become the top destination for Filipino maids seeking work overseas.



A group of Filipino maids are waiting for interviews arranged by a local housekeeping agency. Photo provided by Denghuo.com

lish; and those who want to show off their social status by employing a foreigner.

More maids have begun to view Beijing as an ideal working destination, Wang said.

Although there are no official figures of how many Filipino maids work in Beijing, Wang said he thinks the number is in the thousands.

Many Filipinos he meets initially hold the out-of-date impression that Beijing doesn't have as many rich families as Hong Kong or Macao, Wang said. But when

Under-the-table business

Beijing Today called four local housekeeping agencies and found that Filipino maids cost somewhere between 3,000 and 6,000 yuan a month, depending on the maid's education background and working experience.

Most of the agencies provide online interviews and promise the maids can be ready within a month. Some agencies even offer face-to-face interviews with clients within two days.

However, all these proceed-

ings can only be carried out discreetly. Currently, foreigners are prohibited from providing household services on the mainland, so Filipino maids have to go through illegal channels.

A telephone operator from Manqiao Filipino Service Center who calls herself Jiang said the maids enter Beijing on travel or business visas, secured through housekeeping agencies, then work illegally.

Once inside the country, companies that specialize in visa services can help Filipino workers renew their expired visas without flying back to their country, Jiang said.

Many agencies also provide tips to employers on how to avoid trouble from the police.

"The maid needs to avoid being alone outside for long periods of time," Jiang said. "If police come to your house and they've heard you have a Filipino maid, just insist the 'maid' is one of your relatives or friends and call us immediately."

"We have ways to solve the issue," she said.

An official from the Beijing Police Bureau said all Filipino maids who are in Beijing illegally will be deported if they are caught. The employer will also get fined. The official said the police bureau has established a special team to seek out illegal maids in Beijing.

According to China's laws governing the entry and exit of aliens, illegally employed aliens face a fine of up to 1,000 yuan in addition to deportation.

The police official did not disclose how many Filipino maids have been caught so far.

The Filipino embassy refused to comment.

Chaotic market leads to problems

While more Filipino maids are being hired, experts warn that engaging in working relationships without proper supervision and regulations can be risky.

"Once any dispute occurs, such as maids being abused or employers having property stolen, neither side will be able to get any legal protection and both sides will get punished," said Yin Fuqiang, a lawyer from Beijing Longan Law Firm.

Yin said Hong Kong has clear regulations about the management of Filipino maids, and that minimum wages and rights are set in writing.

Without such a clear system on the mainland, the market will be disordered when more illegal maids come, Yin said.

Problems have already appeared. Some Filipinos who come actually have no experience doing housework. They are called "Filipino farmers," and they aren't discovered by local hiring agencies until it's too late – usually when an employer calls to demand a refund.

Some employers have resorted to reporting these "maids" to the police.

Zhang Jijiao, an immigration expert at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the growing market for Filipino nannies is inevitable. Prohibition will not stem the tide.

"Legislative departments should set up a threshold to encourage legal immigration and prohibit illegal immigration," he said, adding that the government should also work faster to establish the country's first immigration law to better manage immigrant laborers.

Chinese families start welcoming foreign au pairs

By Chu Meng

China this month joined the ranks of the International Au Pairs Association (IAPA), a group of 38 countries that facilitate homestays between citizens.

Through the association, foreign nationals between the ages of 18 and 26 can apply to work for three months to two years with Chinese families in 10 cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Qingdao.

"English-speaking countries such as the US, UK and Australia used to be the first choice of our applicants. China was always overlooked. But the demand for Chinese families has risen in the last five years, especially after the Beijing Olympics," Jack Hompes, president of the New York-based IAPA, told *Beijing Today*.

He said young adults' interest in China is growing alongside the country's economic rise. Many university graduates want to learn the Chinese way of doing business by first understanding the culture, Hompes said.

The association has accredited only three companies in China to process IAPA applications: Beijing Zheng Hong Au Pair Cultural Exchange Center, Shanghai E&P Education Service Company and Shenyang EANNA Education Training Center.

This summer, the Beijing firm alone received 100 applications. "We are now working on matching them with qualified families," said Yang Zheng, the company president.

An au pair is defined as a "usually young foreign person who cares for children and does domestic work for a family in return for room and board and the opportunity to learn the family's language."

Yang said tasks can include cooking, cleaning and ironing, and largely depend on the host family.

But she noted that au pair "should be treated by the family as an equal, have his or her own room and receive an allowance."

Yang said the usual practice is that au pairs dine with the host family and join them in activities like outings and travels.

However, host families normally expect to have private time to themselves, particularly in the evenings. During this time, an au pair might retire to his or her room to watch television, study or go out with friends. As an employee, au pairs' work hours are limited by the law of their host country.

Matthias Bach, a 20-year-old German, this month became one of Beijing's first au pairs.

During the next six months, Bach will spend most of his time taking care of the family boy, Bobo, and teaching him English and German.

"Chinese parents are very friendly to me. And their care for children is far beyond that of parents in Germany. Chinese parents tell kids what they should and should not do all the time, but I think it's better if they give kids more room to grow and discover," Bach said.

Bobo's mother, Wang Xiaolu, decided to welcome an au pair into their home, to expose her son to Western culture and a foreign language at an early age. "Bach has taught us a lot," she said. "He is much more independent and organized than most Chinese people his age. He has taught us not to overindulge our son by sharing with us his parents' way of bringing him up. Also, Bobo now speaks English for hours and hours every day."

Though brand new in China, au pair programs have been around for 50 years since they were first established in France.



CFP Photo

How to apply

Beijing HHS International Cultural Exchange Center

Where: Room 508, Huantai Tower, 12A Zhongguancun Nan Jie, Haidian District

Tel: 8782 6866

Web: hhscenter.com

Shanghai E&P Education Service Company

Where: Room 208, UNIS Plaza, Tsinghua Dong Lu, Haidian District

Tel: 8493 7968

Web: aupairchina.org

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I'm new in town and want to make Chinese friends and meet some of my neighbors in the Lido area. Do you know if there are any organizations or events that help foreigners get acquainted with their community?

Check out the International Newcomer's Network (INN), a social organization founded by expats. It offers a support group network for those facing the challenges of settling into Beijing, and provides an opportunity for people to meet new friends and connect with those who have similar interests. INN hosts monthly events at Cosy Café in Lido's Richmond Park. This month's get together will be on Thursday, August 26, from 10 am till noon. For more information, contact the group at 8457 8359.

The door of my apartment closet is covered with a plastic layer that is peeling on one corner. I want to find a carpenter that can help me repair or replace the plastic or a furniture store that can help me fix it.

Many interior decoration companies in town also offer furniture repair services. Below are two companies you can try, both of which offer home services.

Beijing Meijijia

Tel: 8069 7122,

13718234660

Sanda Furniture Repair Company

Tel: 12683676945

(By Liang Meilan)

SUBSCRIBE to BEIJING TODAY gift!

Hotline: 010-65902513, 65902534, 65902626 (voice message function is on for 24 hrs)
Email: bjtoday@bjtoday.com.cn Web: www.bjtoday.com.cn

How TO GET A GIFT



a gift card
worth 200 yuan
valid as cash
at Goose & Duck Pub

Beijing Today one-year subscription costs 104 yuan:
You can get a Goose and Duck gift card worth 200 yuan.
Stocks are limited, so subscribe as soon as possible.



Digitized urban life

Art exhibition analyzes man-city relations



Habitat C3B, video still
© Niklas Goldbach



The Artvertiser, simulated city landscape with
The Artvertiser effect © Julian Oliver



Conversation Piece, view of the Installation
© Tudor Bratu

Long a cornerstone of the international media art world, works from the transmediale are on their way to Beijing for the first time.

The festival, originally founded for video art, has been held annually since 1988 as a series of exhibitions, conferences, live performances and artist presentations throughout Berlin.

For its China tour, it will be bringing 17 performances, videos and installations from the exhibition *Stadt am Rande* (At a City's Edge).

Using digital devices, engineering tools and software, participating artists question, reinterpret, expand, visualize and explore the urban structure that surrounds them.

"The show is about rediscovering the city by looking at it from a different angle – about how it affects lifestyles, buildings and personalities," co-curator Pierre Wolter said.

Some pieces examine the relationship between the virtual and real world.

The winner of the transmediale Award 2010, Michelle Teran's *Buscando al Sr. Goodbar* (Looking for Mr. Goodbar) is one such example.

Teran attempts to visualize virtual social networks and content by tracking them down to their physical location.

She explores the interplay between social and media networks in urban environments. Shown as a video installation, it consists of a threefold tour through the Spanish town of Murcia taking place simultaneously by bus, as well as by Google Earth and YouTube.

From a bus seat, the viewer embarks on a physical search for the locations and authors of various YouTube videos produced in town.

When a YouTube video is tagged with geographical coordinates, the coordinates are then passed on to Google Earth. The bus follows these routes virtually on Google Earth as YouTube videos are screened inside. By entering the space where the video was shot, it creates an intimate encounter between creator and viewer.

The bus gives viewers a chance to become involved in everyday performances and actions that would normally go unnoticed. They meet a man who can solve a Rubik's Cube in less than two minutes; a group of friends who sing while drunk; a 14-year-old who headbangs in his bedroom; somebody who is choking; a man who is teaching himself Arabic; and a couple falling in love.

In Niklas Goldbach's *Habitat C3B*, the city is visualized as a complex labyrinth of structures and forms,

neatly lifeless, cold and barren in spite of the vegetation. It's a sci-fi landscape, yet somehow familiar.

The video was filmed in 2008 in Front de Seine, a district south of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The district, built in the 1970s, is a result of Georges Pompidou's attempt to modernize the city. Fallen into disrepair, Paris has launched a major project to renovate the area.

In Goldbach's video, restless characters resemble cloned office clerks trapped in a loop-like nightmare. "It makes viewers ask themselves where the city is and who lives in it. The images evoke questions about standardization and control, about the interplay between urban life and human emotion," Wolter said.

Like Goldbach's work, Marc Aschenbrenner's also visualize an almost apocalyptic landscape with humanoid forms, solitary sculptures, seemingly adjusting to an alienating urban environment.

Aschenbrenner's work *Im Abri* (In the Rock Shelter) transports the viewer into a beautiful yet deserted and mysterious, and at times uncanny, parallel universe.

Creatures that seem to have adapted to the hostile environment live in this space. They have adopted different shapes and have been wrapped by shells.

One of the protagonists is a man covered with white foil, from whose back a gigantic silver cube is growing. He pulls the cube behind him like a snail carrying its shell. He drags himself across the wasteland and crawls into a ruin, but as soon as he enters it his shell falls apart.

Another man dressed in a blue-black tape suit walks in bizarre loops throughout the area. He climbs the stairs in the building where the silver man has collapsed. When they meet, the silver man lies lifeless and deflated as the blue-black man discovers him.

Although their quest seems to be one for contact, the two prefer their solitude and will brave any challenge for a new hiding place. With their faces hidden, traditional means of communication are lost. Their interaction is a shadow of what modern people enjoy.

"The work confronts its viewer with a futuristic scenario to provoke questions about landscapes and life forms, as well as the interaction between the two," Melanie Zagrean, another curator, said.

Some artists focus on human communication, both in reality and in the virtual world.

Tudor Bratu's work *Conversation Piece* is one exam-

ple in which an interactive multimedia installation recreates the 11 ancient city organs.

Each key is connected to an audio file. When a key is pressed, a short sentence or fragment of a sentence is pronounced through the speakers, in either a male or a female voice. The topics range from philosophy to art history, but they also contain personal reflections on the experience of everyday life.

The installation can be used to either compose ever changing stories or to generate a conversation between the two voices. "In its attempt to capture elusive human communication, snippets of conversation and thoughts, the piece manages to materialize an urban landscape and allows the audience to reflect on itself by the compositions that it creates," Zagrean said.

The art group Boredoresearch, created by artists Vicki Isley and Paul Smith, also unites the virtual and the material in an installation and proposes an unusual kind of slow communication.

Boredoresearch created the installation *Real Snail Mail*, which uses real live snails equipped with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags on their shells to deliver electronic messages.

Users of the service send a message via the Real Snail Mail website which is routed to the tank to await collection by a snail agent. As the snails wander around the tank, they come into range of a RFID reader, which assigns the email message to the RFID tag.

The tags are then physically carried around the tank by the snails until one of them passes close to a second reader. When this happens, the second reader forwards the message over the net in the usual way.

Other artists explore the physical environment, at times in a humorous manner.

Julian Oliver's interactive artwork *Advertiser* proposes an augmented reality that creates virtual add-ons to our known world.

Advertiser consists of a custom-made handheld binocular device and specially designed software used to recognize individual advertisements, each of which becomes a virtual canvas that can be viewed through the *Advertiser* binoculars.

"Both Beijing and Berlin are political and cultural centers. With rapid urbanization, the ancient history of these two cities is facing both change and challenge," the curator said.



Im Abri / In the rock shelter, video still © Marc Aschenbrenner

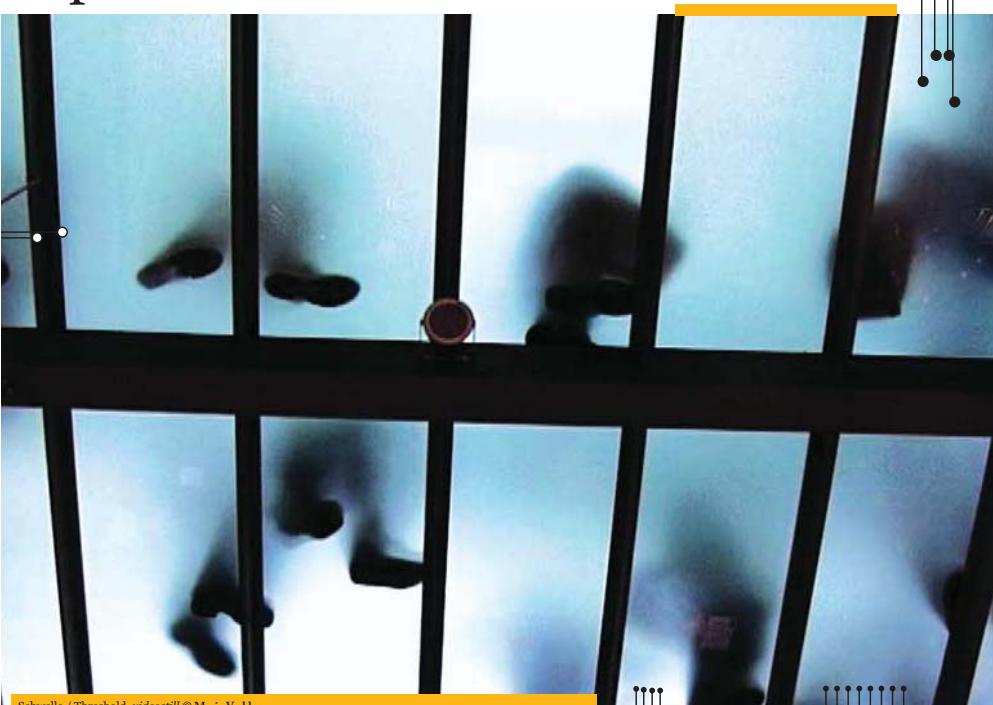
Using digital devices, engineering tools and software, participating artists question, reinterpret, expand, visualize and explore the urban structure that surrounds them.

By He Jianwei

Every city has its symbols: the Brandenburg Gate is as iconic of Berlin as Tian'anmen is of Beijing. But cities are about more than recognizable imagery.

Berlin artists are exploring the hidden and unseen of their city through digital art as they try to unravel its new relationship with its inhabitants in the Internet era.

Having attended this year's transmediale, the international media arts festival in Berlin, the artists are bringing their works to Beijing's Today Art Museum next Monday.



Schwelle / Threshold, videostill © Maria Vedder



Sr. Goodbar, videostill of the Performance © Michelle Teran

Stadt am Rande (At a City's Edge)

New Media Art of transmediale, Berlin

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingdi Community,

32 Baizhan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: August 16-28, daily, 10 am - 5 pm

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 5876 6600



Reflection, view of the Installation © Andreas Fischer und Benjamin Maus

Pearl Buck, eternal friend of China



Pearl Buck in China: Journey to the Good Earth

By Hilary Spurling, 320pp, Simon & Schuster, \$27

By Charles Zhu

Pearl S. Buck, the Nobel laureate who introduced China to the US through *The Good Earth*, is explored in the biography *Pearl Buck in China: Journey to the Good Earth* by Hilary Spurling, biographer of Henri Matisse and Ivy Compton-Burnett.

Spurling writes that Buck had a "magic power - possessed by all truly phenomenal best-selling authors - to tap directly into currents of memory and dream secreted deep within the popular imagination."

Buck was born Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker to a zealous Christian missionary family in 1892. Her father, Absalom Sydenstricker, was a fanatical man who was "proud of his ability to whip up quarrels with himself at the center." She was the fifth of his seven children.

As a small child lying awake in bed at night, Pearl grew up listening to the cries of Chinese women on the street outside calling back the spirits of their dead or dying babies. In some ways she herself was more Chinese than American. "I spoke Chinese first, and more easily," she said.

"If America was for dreaming about the world in which I lived was Asia. I did not consider myself a white person in those days," she says. Her friends called her Zhenzhu and treated her as one of their own. She visited their houses, listening to their mothers and aunts talk so frankly and in such detail about the problems of death, sex and quarrels.

She roamed the Chinese country-

side, where she would often come upon the remains of abandoned baby girls left for the village dogs, and she would bury them. The young Buck and her family lived at subsistence level in houses that were little more than shacks and managed to survive the Boxer Rebellion and the subsequent nationalist revolution.

When she returned to the US to attend Randolph-Macon Women's College in Virginia, Buck found herself painfully alienated from her peers. "Girls came in groups to stare at me," wrote Buck, remembering her first harsh college days some 50 years later. She was deemed different not only for her Chinese clothes and hairstyle, but also for her witnessing of war, infanticide and sexual slavery.

But that alienation gave Buck her strength as a writer, gracing her with the outsider vision needed to interpret China for the outside world.

She learned Chinese life from the history plays she saw performed in temple courtyards by bands of traveling actors, or by the stories she heard from professional storytellers and the family cook who entertained Pearl with episodes from a small private library of books only he knew how to read.

It was her initiation into old Chinese novels - *Madam White Snake*, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Outlaws of the Marsh* - that she would draw from for her own fiction.

In 1917, she married John Lossing Buck, an American agricultural economist stationed in China. With

him she had the chance to travel into China's interior. Much from such trips would, Spurling says, "be absorbed and distilled a decade later in the magical opening sequence of *The Good Earth*."

Twelve years later she left her home in China to settle her severely impaired daughter in a New Jersey institution. She did so with borrowed money, as she could not afford the expenses. She recalled that she was "nearly destroyed by grief and fear."

When she returned to her house in Nanjing, she knew precisely what to do: "This, I decided was the time to begin really to write." At age 10 she had already set her heart on becoming a novelist, as charmed by Chinese classics as by Charles Dickens.

The end of *The Good Earth* is not a pretty one. She was accused in the US of being a radical leftist, and *TIME* magazine banned her from its pages.

Spurling presents here a biography, rich in detail and with an extensive historical background, that tells how a missionary's daughter turned into a proficient writer and vividly restores the life stories Buck preferred to forget herself.

The biographer unravels the "heavy, cumbersome, potentially toxic baggage" Buck carried with her and shows an American woman who tried to bridge the Chinese and American cultures that seemed mutually incomprehensible, and who was aware as early as 1925 that China would rise.

An eye for music

By He Jianwei

It would be no exaggeration to say Yung-chen Nieh is Taiwan's top graphic designer.

In June, he took the new prize for Best Album Design/Packaging at the 21st Golden Melody Awards, a music award annually presented in Taiwan and known as the Chinese Grammys. Seven of the Top 10 pop albums on the Chinese market have packaging designed by Nieh.

Born in 1977 and working in graphic design for eight years, Nieh has as many as 1,000 graphic works for Chinese pop music albums, movies, performances and book covers in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the mainland.

Last year, Nieh summarized his seven-year career in graphic design in the book *Signature Works Yet to Come*, a collection of 14 essays and 100 samples of his work.

Its simplified Chinese version was released last Monday, and Nieh was in Beijing to talk about his life at One Way Street Bookstore.

Nieh majored in graphic design and became a contributing copywriter at Eslite Bookstore, one of the largest bookstore chains in Taiwan, after he won the store's copywriting award in his sophomore year.

He first won recognition with the publication of his graduate work, the book *Some Kidding in Reality*. That prompted him to establish his studio in 2002, and since then he has been designing album covers.

Design is a career for creative types. "It is not enough to have creative ideas. As a good designer, you must try everything to persuade your client to receive your ideas," Nieh said.

Every album has some concept related to the musicians, but Nieh prefers to visualize

the music. Usually he will listen to the music and the producer's concept about the album before submitting his design.

The art of negation is a critical skill for a good designer. When his ideas clash with his client's, he always persuades his clients to understand the meaning of his design.

Sometimes, he will give several proposals. "Clients who turn down all my proposals get sent to find another designer," he said. "A good designer must have his or her principles."

The international design book *Musikgraphics* lists Nieh as one of the best 100 designers of music artwork. The book provides the selection of his innovative packaging for vinyl records and MP3s.

Nieh is a member of Type Director Club, an international creators' organization in New York.



Signature Work Yet to Come

By Yung-chen Nieh, 232pp, Guangxi Normal University Press, 58 yuan

Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers.

A Wild Light

By Marjorie M. Liu, 320pp, Ace, \$7.99

For too long Maxine Kiss has felt an inexplicable darkness inside her - a force she channels into hunting the demons bent on destroying the human race. But when she finds herself covered in blood and crouched beside her grandfather's dead body with no memory of what happened, Maxine begins to fear that the darkness has finally consumed her.

Snakes & Earrings

By Hitomi Kanehara, 128pp, Plume, \$5.54

This novel about a young woman living in the violent world of Japan's underground youth culture is both shocking and strangely beautiful. Enchanted by the snake-like forked tongue of a stranger called Ama, nineteen-year-old Lui takes a walk on another side of life. Following Ama home the night she meets him, Lui straightaway moves in with him

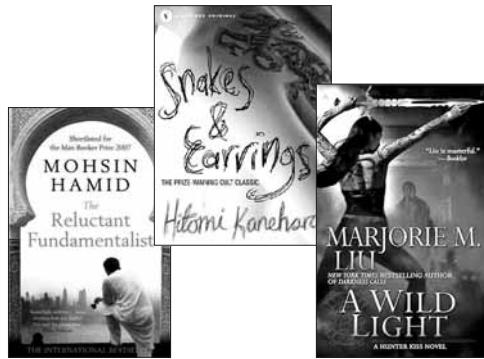
and begins making plans to have her own tongue pierced. Determined to push her boundaries further, she asks Ama's strange friend Shiba to design an exquisite dragon tattoo for her back. But when Lui and Shiba begin an affair, Ama's jealousy is stirred and the situation becomes explosive.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist

By Mohsin Hamid, 208pp, Harvest Books, \$14

Changez is living the American dream. At the top of his class at Princeton, he is snapped up by the elite valuation firm of Underwood Samson. He thrives on the energy of New York, and his budding romance with elegant, beautiful Erica promises entry into Manhattan society at the same exalted level once occupied by his own family in Lahore. But in the wake of September 11, Changez finds his position in his adopted city suddenly overturned, and his budding relationship with Erica eclipsed by the reawakened ghosts of her past.

(By He Jianwei)



iPad to save the magazine?

By Wang Yu

The iPad may be the savior of the magazine industry.

The industry has been reeling from an advertising crash that took a 12 percent bite out of revenue at publications across the board.

But with the App Store, where paper, ink and distribution no longer factor into the cost equation, publishers may have found new hope. From *TIME* magazine to *GQ*, dozens of big-name magazines are joining the iPad revolution in hopes of becoming early winners in the new business model.

But while it may be a great idea, theory rarely lines up with reality. iPads are still a toy reserved for the "well-to-do" minority. Beijing Today recently received an iPad and has been using it to test several publications over the past few weeks. This week, together with Chinese readers, our paper will try to figure out whether iPad can work for.

How to start

Magazines are issued as Apple Applications, which means interested readers must first register at the App Store. All accounts require a valid international Visa or MasterCard, as the store only accepts US dollars.

The process is easy and fast, and even with most of the App Servers being overseas the lag in China is minimal.

After registration, users can browse the App Store. But the store interface makes magazines difficult to find. While there are categories for music, games and utilities, there is none for periodicals.

Magazines instead fall into keywords like "news," "entertainment" and the ubiquitous "lifestyle." Indeed, the only way to browse for magazines is to search for the word "magazine" and pray the publication included it in its App name.

There are two ways to get magazine on the iPad. Popular titles like *TIME*, *GQ*, *Vanity Fair* and *Wired* are distributed through a client-side reader App that users must install. Other magazines like *Interview* release their own separate App for each issue.

Downloading mags

The iPad does not feature a LAN port – it is Wi-Fi exclusive.

That is great if you work in an office with a wireless network or if you live in Starbucks or similar cafes that offer free Wi-Fi.

For home use, this means needing to buy and set up your own wireless router. Most Beijing homes use a 1 megabit ADSL connection. With this connection, magazine download is fairly speedy. It takes 10 minutes to download a single issue of most publications. Large, graphically intense publications like *Wired* – shipped at a whopping 500 megabytes per issue – take longer.

GQ was the worst to download. Due to its graphics-heavy nature and client-server model that cuts out Apple's App mirrors, each issue can be painfully slow to download – assuming it doesn't time out and fail.

Original content

The iPad features a spectacular 9.7-inch touch screen. Magazine pages are rendered clear and crisp, and quality seems to grow with file sizes.

The paper editions are usually translated perfectly in their iPad incarnations. All your favorite four-page just-paying-the-bills advertisement spreads are present to gobble up disk space.

GQ functions like a glorified PDF file; it does nothing to take advantage of the iPad's ability to embed video, web links and sound clips. The resolution was atrocious, and much of the text was rendered as unreadably small graphics.

Apparently users agree, because within three months the App version of the magazine has been downloaded only 365 times.

However, *GQ*'s failure to harness the power of digital media by no means reflects on the industry as a whole. The tech-savvy *Wired* has become the darling of an industry banking on this new model by selling 73,000 copies in the first nine



days after its release. The iPad edition outsold the print edition in June.

"It isn't hard to understand why. *Wired* magazine is all about technology. Its spirit feeds the appetites of the geeks and gadget fans who probably already own an iPad," says Vincent Wen, a network engineer.

The charts are beautifully designed and the magazine offers interactive photo galleries on its iPad edition. But for all its effort, *Wired* still seems to expect readers to treat their iPad edition like a print magazine in an iPad shell. Static pages dominate.

While the magazines may have gone digital, they have done so in distribution alone. Core concepts like links to similar articles are never offered even when your iPad is connected to the Internet.

Sharing functions seen on websites are also missing. Commentary is absent. Of all the magazines, only *Pop Science* embeds a "letter" section that allows readers to write feedback to the editors.

"The concepts we are seeing in iPad magazines are hideously out of date, even

going by early Web 2.0 era standards. You can only read what the publisher wants you to read, and I think there should be more interactive elements if they are expecting to generate any demand," says David Zhou, a magazine editor.

Good price

For Chinese readers, the price is the attractive part. Import magazines are not cheap – at least 60 yuan – and news and fashion magazines cost even more. But an issue of *GQ* in the App Store costs \$2.99 (20 yuan).

The most expensive is *TIME* magazine at \$4.99 – an incredible price that is even more expensive than its US newsstand edition. Josh Quittner, editor-at-large of the magazine, attempted to justify this by explaining in his blog that the iPad edition offers all the same content as the print edition, but with more photo galleries and videos.

But even that price seems acceptable for readers in China. iPad is the best choice for domestic readers looking to save money. The problem is that very few magazines are offering iPad editions.



Readers say ...



*"My favorite magazine on the iPad is *Wired* because it is very well designed. Compared to print editions, iPad magazines have more potential to take advantage of visual and sound effects. But I worry that this will create a new problem where articles become secondary to the magazine. You may end up having to click to play videos and sound clips before you can read the article."*

The magazine and greater press industry should not be pinning their hopes on the iPad. They are in a different industry. This platform is about more than their traditional concepts of a magazine."

– Danny Wu, Chinese student in the UK



*"There are a few domestic magazines available at the App Store for free. I personally only pay for *TIME*. Maybe Americans find the \$4.99 to be too expensive, but we really don't have another choice."*

I don't think that iPad is going to save the traditional press. It is just another new crutch that will only further help to push them off a cliff. They need to be thinking about how to break out of their old habits if they want to

save themselves.

iPad has potential for hobbyist zines. Most zines are shared between the creators and their friends, just like social media. You may not depend on iPad magazines now, but it will be the magazine format of the future.

But all of this is a long way off in China. Readers here still don't want to pay for anything, copyright is poorly protected and everyone in our press industry is oblivious to new technology."

– Li Zhi, editor of Holiday 100.

Popular Taiwanese design store opens in Beijing

By Felix Gan

Taiwanese industrial designer Jeff Shi recently opened a branch of his Taipei-based design shop Dragonfly in Beijing, bringing the city an added touch of creativity.

Dragonfly has three stores in Taipei that sell products known for their creative designs. In its Beijing store, visitors can find a comfortable bamboo chair, a book made of rice and grain, a panda sculpture and even a bicycle with four wheels.

"Good designs lie in every aspect of our life, so a design shop should be where you can find everything," Shi says.

Shi has been a buyer of industrial designs for 14 years. He has honed his tastes over the years.

Take, for example, the colorful belts hanging in the newly opened store. He holds one of them and shows it to a potential customer. "These are all plastic, but very soft," he says. "They are specially designed for people who always travel and also love fashion. When they wear these belts, they won't get hurt by the sharp points, and the colors absolutely cater toward fashionistas."

The store doesn't just sell foreign labels. Shi has his own brand, too. His Chair Jun Zi, made completely out of bamboo, won this year's Red Dot Award, also known as the Oscar of industrial design.

The chair looks simple, but it's extremely comfortable and safe. Shi says he created it to match the curve of the human back. However, the essence of the chair lies in the Chinese philosophy it represents.

While leading a creative team in Taiwan, Shi accidentally went into a small county where all the locals made a living by bamboo products. Shi quickly realized that in ancient times, a Chinese nobleman was judged by how well he could utilize bamboo.

Thus was born the idea behind Chair Jun Zi. The end result was simple yet sturdy – the chair can support 600 kg – which is what Shi calls a typical Chinese design.

Shi says he hopes people who visit Dragonfly will find the inspiration to create more works with typical Chinese elements and promote the country's creative industry.

Dragon Fly

Where: Unit 1, F1, Tower E, Global Trade Center, 36 Beisanhuan Dong Lu, Dongcheng District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 5957 5299



Trash bin, 336-936 yuan



Bling bling necklace, 4,500 yuan



Chair one, 6,180 yuan



360 degree chair comes in four colors, 3,580-6,080 yuan



Bamboo chair, 14,500 yuan

Photos by Felix Gan



Bird cage clock, 1,790 yuan



Leather Mao suit, price unknown



Abstract clock, price unknown



Registration Period: 2010.7.10 – 8.21 Hotline: 400 – 820 – 3093

Official Website: www.newbalance.com.cn

Registration Venue:

Beijing JinYuanYanSha Store F1 JinYuanYanSha, No.3 Yuanda Road, Haidian District

ShuangJing Carrefour Factory Store F1 Carrefour ShuangJing, No.31 GuangQu Road, Chaoyang District

Beijing Junfei Department Store F5 Junfei Department, No.8 XuanWuMenOuterStreet, Xuanwu District

Beijing Wumart Store F4 Xinhua, No.1 North XinJiekou Avenue, Xicheng District

Beijing Shicetoutlet

No.67 F2 Shicetoutlet, No.28 North XiangJiang Road, Chaoyang District

Beijing WangJing Sports 100 Store F3 WangJing Sports 100 Store Jiamao Shopping Center

No.33 North GuanShan Avenue, Chaoyang District

Beijing Guanmen Experience Store

No.123 Guanmen Avenue, Chongwen District

Beijing The Place Store

F1 South Blk. The Place Shopping Mall, No.9 Guanghua Road, Chaoyang District

Beijing Raffles City Store

F5 XidanJoyCity Store

F5 Joy City Xidan, Xicheng District

Beijing Huaxian GongyiXiao Store

No.34 ChengHaiJiaYuan, NanSiHuanZhong Road, Fengtai District

Beijing Huaxiang Wanjia Mall Store

No.2, Baigou Rd, Haidian District

Beijing Dangdai Mall Store

F5 Dangdai Mall, No.40 Zhongguancun Street, Haidian District

Supporting Partner: Beijing Olympic City Development Association Beijing Municipal Bureau of Sport

Organizer: Beijing Social Sports Management Center Associate With: Beijing Huaxiangyuan Advertising Co., Ltd

Title Sponsor: Partner: Associate Sponsor: Supporting Sponsors: Promoter:

Restaurants newly opened in party zones

New



Pork, 32 yuan

By Annie Wei

The rent for residential and commercial spaces near Sanlitun and Workers Stadium has increased dramatically in the past six months due to good business and high foot traffic. New restaurants, cafes and bars open almost every week. *Beijing Today* checked out three of the new kids on the block.

Fusion barbecue combines Korean and American styles

Banana Fish, on the third floor of Tongli, has developed a reputation for having a nice ambience and quality grilled food at affordable prices. It remains to be seen whether its reputation rubs off on its newest neighbor, Bambu BBQ.

Both are owned by Jay Liu, who lived in Los Angeles for two decades before returning to China just before the Olympics.

Dining around town, Liu found that quality steak costs much more than in the US, even though ingredients and labor are both cheaper here. He decided to offer customers steak and barbecue at more reasonable prices.

Bambu BBQ expands on this concept. In the US, barbecuing is a popular backyard activity enjoyed among friends and neighbors. Liu wants Bambu BBQ to have that laid-back atmosphere.

There are 23 kinds of meat available, including prime beef (88 yuan for 180 grams), beef chuck (68 yuan for 180 grams), chicken breast (25 yuan for 200 grams), squid (32 yuan for 200 grams), shrimp (22 yuan for four pieces), sweet potatoes (8 yuan) and abalone mushrooms (18 yuan).

The restaurant has a signature sauce bar with 20 kinds of sauces for diners to mix and match. After ordering the meat and making your sauce, sit back and relax while restaurant staff does the grilling for you.

Bambu BBQ's cocktails (30 yuan each) include mojitos, cougar juice (vodka, watermelon and lime juice) and lychee beauty (vodka, lychee liqueur, raspberry, lime cordial and lychee juice).

Salads start at 15 yuan, with 45 yuan getting you unlimited plates of salad starting September 5. *Beijing Today* recommends the green papaya salad, which is crispy and fresh. Also available is curry fried rice (15 yuan), minestrone soup (15 yuan) and potato leek soup (15 yuan).

Bambu BBQ has a major promotion going on now: order any meat or seafood and you will get an equivalent or lower priced meat or seafood for free. The promotion lasts until September 4.

Meanwhile, there are 12 new dishes at Banana Fish. We recommend the grilled bacon, chicken and mango (48 yuan). The mussel promotion is also good: only 50 yuan for unlimited mussels, which are freshly prepared in white wine or pepper.

Bambu BBQ

Where: 311, Tongli, 43, Sanlitun Bei Li, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 2 pm, 5-10 pm

Tel: 6415 7166



Salad, 15 yuan

Photos by Liu Jay

Oyo House: all-day breakfast

New



Breakfast, 68 yuan



Inside Oyo House

Photos by Jim Boyce

68-yuan meal of ham, bacon, sausages, eggs, mashed potatoes, fried onions and mushrooms, which comes with two fresh rolls and a side salad.

After the big breakfast, you will want to order coffee, tea or juice, which start at 20 yuan. Oyo also carries cocktails (50 yuan), Tsingtao or Corona (25 yuan) and wine (starting at 55 yuan).

Oyo House

Where: Sanlitun Hou Jie, 5, Sanlitun Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Monday to Friday, 11 am – midnight; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am – late

Tel: Not yet available

In the bustling alley between Tongli, 3-3 and the DVD stores, Oyo House has opened at the location formerly occupied by Pink.

Oyo has a fashion boutique window that commands attention. Those wanting to check out the clothes will have to walk through the restaurant, which has modern decorations – a cozy sofa, orchids, lilies and candles.

Apart from coffee and free Wi-Fi, a major selling point is Oyo's all-day breakfast. The menu has quite a few options, ranging from American-style breakfasts to cereal and fruit.

Beijing Today recommends the

Home-style Yunnan open 24 hours

New

When one craves Yunnan cuisine, the Gulou area is often a first choice, with its courtyard ambience and lush plants a reminder of the real Yunnan.

But if you're looking for a simple Yunnan street grill, a new option just became available: 24-Hour Yunnan Grill and Food along the noisy outdoor dining scene opposite to Workers Gymnasium.

Beijing Today recommends its zhanshuiyu (28 yuan per 500 grams) – poached carp with chopped green and red peppers, ginger and spring onions. Carp may have lots of small bones, but the restaurant said theirs – sweet and prepared as in the south – is worth the effort.

The youlin ganba (38 yuan) is a signature dish with deep-fried beef slices, peppermint, garlic and ginger. The greens are crispy but a bit oily. The beef is chewy and a little salty. This dish goes well with Dali beer (12 yuan), shipped in normal bottles directly from Dali, Yunnan Province. But those who enjoy Heineken may find Dali beer a bit too light.

Heisanduo or hongsanduo (both 18 yuan), stir-fried dishes of minced pork, green pepper and preserved

turnip, are recommended by the restaurant as appetite boosters.

Beijing Today recommends the grilled food, like Chinese chives (12 yuan), which reminded us of the stuff we ate on our trips to Yunnan.

Other good dishes include caokunu (10 yuan per tail), grilled carp marinated in pepper and soy sauce; Laos-style papaya salad (18 yuan), beef rice noodle (12 yuan) and rice steamed in bamboo (12 yuan).

The restaurant is actually 24-Hour Yunnan Grill and Food's second branch – there is another one in Gaobeidian in east Chaoyang District. Both are owned by a Yunnan man who has lived in Beijing for a decade. Some of the staff are a bit shy – they are ethnic minorities from Yunnan – but you'll no doubt find a dollop of southern hospitality in their service.

24-Hour Yunnan Grill and Food

Where: Opposite Workers' Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Starting Monday, always open

Tel: 6416 6872

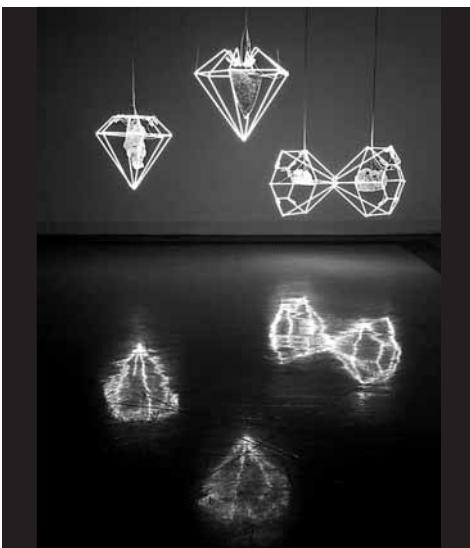


Grilled carp, 10 yuan



Bamboo-steamed rice, 12 yuan

CFP Photos



Telling apart the useful and useless

By Huang Daohen

Zhou Wendou pulverizes a book bought at a Spanish book fair in town and uses the pulp to make a new one. Which book is more useful? asks the Beijing-born artist.

In his latest solo exhibition, *The Use of the Useless*, Zhou tries to discover via installation that things are necessary and unnecessary in daily life.

"This may sound like an easy thing to do, but it is actually pretty difficult," says Tang Yao, curator of the ongoing exhibition at 798 Art District.

Zhou, 40, received a bachelor's degree from the Central Academy of Art and Design in 1996. Two years later, he moved to Madrid to join the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Complutense. Zhou would remain in Spain for 10 years, a country that has drawn artists to its melancholy yet tense atmosphere.

While there, Zhou held several successful solo exhibitions. At first glance, his works appear like a collection of big, simple toys: a ping-pong table, two tennis rackets, five basketball hoops and a heap of

badminton.

"Those who take a closer look may feel puzzled because the seemingly ordinary toys are actually a challenge to tradition," Tang says.

Paradox characterizes Zhou's art. When he mashes up a book, he transforms a daily item into a riddle. "I try to bring back various things into the realm of possibility and mystery," explains Tang, who, with his closely cropped hair and blue T-shirt, does not fit Chinese people's image of an artist who has spent a decade in Western Europe.

Compared with other contemporary Chinese artists, Tang says that Zhou does not possess much social awareness or a critical viewpoint.

"He is not the vigorous fighter that foreign audiences expect of our artists. What really matters to Zhou is art," Tang says.

The Use of the Useless

Where: Other Gallery Beijing Space, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 7, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6431 9684

Sunday, August 15

Movie

The Great Dictator (1940)

During the last days of World War I, a clumsy German soldier saves the life of a devoted military pilot. Unfortunately, their flight from the advancing enemy ends in a crash in which the soldier develops amnesia. After spending a few years in the hospital, the soldier reopens his old barber shop in a Jewish ghetto.

Where: Broadway Cinema-

que, 2/F Building 4, North section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Nightlife

Don't be Too Psychedelic

The former bassist of AK-47

and Ruins has gone solo as a folk singer.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaduokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng

District

When: 9 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6401 4611

Exhibition

Southern Sentiment, Northern Delight

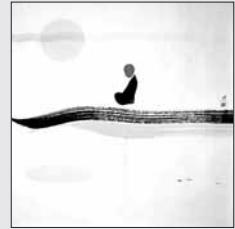
The show presents ink and wash paintings by two artists. Fang Xiang depicts southern courtyards, while Tian Xutong focuses on the simplicity of life.

Where: HaKaren Art Gallery, Baixinzhuan Xi, Houshayu Town, Shunyi District

When: Until September 12,

daily except Monday, 9:30 am - 6 pm; Sunday, 11 am - 5 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 8046 2655



Upcoming

Nightlife

The Opposite Me

A show promoting the second album of Zhang Yunjing, the winner of Taiwan's first Super Idol talent contest in 2008.

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79

When: August 19, 7:30 pm

Admission: Ticket free for purchase of every album at 41.60 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

Stage in September

Concert

London Symphony Orchestra

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: September 12, 7:30 pm

Admission: 200-2,010 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Pictures at an Exhibition - Xu Mu's Piano Recital

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: September 23, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: September 24, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-380 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Joanie Madden and Cherish the Ladies

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: September 29-30, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-880 yuan

Tel: 400 610 3721

Drama

Du Lala

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: September 1-5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-680 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

Romeo and Zhu Yingta

Where: Haidian Theater, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian District

When: September 3-4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-480 yuan

Tel: 6405 4842

The Poison

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: September 10-11, 7:30 pm

Admission: 20-150 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

I Love Peach Blossom

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: September 14-15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 20-180 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Red Rose and White Rose

Where: Multi-Purpose Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: September 14-23, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Keep your urinary system running clear

Stones on the rise among children

Using data from 42 American pediatric hospitals, researchers found that the number of children diagnosed with kidney stones each year has risen from 125 in 1999 to 1,389 in 2008.

That translates into 57 cases per 100,000 children treated at the hospitals in 2008, the researchers reported in the *Journal of Urology*.

Another study published earlier this year also showed that kidney stones were diagnosed in children four times as often in 2007 as in 1996.

It's not clear whether, or to what extent, the increase seen in the current study reflects an upswing in kidney stones among children in general, because the figures come from children seen at hospitals, rather than from the general population.

But kidney stones are being treated more often at children's hospitals.

In recent years, more hospitals have opened pediatric kidney stone clinics. Some researchers said the current findings could have been driven in part by intensified marketing of stone-management services at the hospitals included in the study.

But there are other reasons to believe there has been an increase in kidney stones – especially with obesity being a known risk factor.

In addition to poor dietary habits, low fluid consumption and high sodium, animal fat and protein intake can contribute to kidney stones.

Children with a family history of kidney stones are at a much greater risk of developing them early in life. Researchers suggested that parents of such children ensure that they stay well-hydrated, especially during the summer months, because water is the best way to prevent stones.

But despite the study's alarmist tone, it is important to note that even with the increase in repeated incidents kidney stones remain a rare ailment in children.

Symptoms of the stones

Kidney stones develop when the urine contains more calcium, uric acid and a compound called oxalate than can be diluted by body fluid. Stones usually cause no damage, but can be painful to pass.

"Calculi is a common culprit of urinary disease. It can be concentrated in the kidneys, urethral tract and the vesicles. Chinese medicine classifies the disease as being caused by

a of *sha lin, shi lin* or *xue lin* (sparse urination caused by stone obstruction)," said Yang Yongyuan, the urologist of Beijing Guang'anmen Hospital.

1. Kidneys stones are characterized by a dull pain in one side of the lower back with pain radiating from the loins to the groin. In a more complicated infection, the patient may suffer from fever and expel bloody or pus-filled urine.

2. Urethral calculus is accompanied by acute pain in one side of the upper abdomen and the lower back and bloody urine. If the stones are in the upper third of the path, then the pain will be concentrated on the spine between the kidneys and radiate out to the hip bone and the groin. As the stones descend, the pain will also descend toward the thighs, testicles or vulva.

3. Vesicle calculus manifests burning pain that comes at the end of urination. The pain mainly occurs in the lower abdomen and may radiate to the perineum. Other symptoms are difficulty of interruption of urination, frequent urination and bleeding at the end of the stream.

4. Urethral calculus causes painful or difficult urination, where the stream is usually scanty drops.

Chinese medicine as treatment

Large stones may require treatment to break them up or surgical removal. But small stones may be treated with acupuncture or dissolved by Chinese medicine, Yang said.

Acupuncture is suitable for small stones less than 5 millimeters in diameter. It can be performed in both painful and in pain-free periods to help move the stone.

When pain is intense, needles are inserted at points that influence the urinary tract and into points near the location of the pain. Treatment may be daily or even twice daily depending on the severity of the pain.

Acupuncture may also be used to strengthen the kidneys and to improve and promote urination. Treatment is usually once per week.

Chinese herbs are also effective at treating small- to mid-size stones.

"If you suffer pain in the waist and the lower abdomen accompanied by nausea, vomiting and bloody urine, and if your tongue is white and your pulse is rapid, this would be considered a sign of chi stagnation," Yang said.

Boil and drink pyrosia leaf, moneywort, plantain seed, clus-

By Li Zhixin

While kidney stones have long been a common ailment of middle age, pediatric urologists and kidney specialists in the US have reported a sharp rise in their incidence among children during the past decade.



ter mallow fruit, oriental water plantain rhizome, citron fruit, cow-cockle seed, radish seed and rhubarb to promote the circulation of chi and induce urination to push out the stones.

"If you suffer continuous pain in the waist or the lower abdomen accompanied by fever, frequent urination that is painful, cloudy or bloody urine or which contains pus, and if your tongue is yellow and your pulse is uneven, this is sign of

damp-heat," he said.

Boil and drink moneywort, prostrate knotweed, Chinese pink herb, talc, cork-tree bark, capejasmine fruit, rhubarb and licorice root to clear heat and dampness, relieve painful urination and expel the stones.

"If the illness lasts for a long period and you suffer a persistent ache in the waist and limbs, fullness of the abdomen, weak urination and if your tongue is pale and your

pulse is deep, this is a sign of kidney weakness," he said.

Boil and drink Chinese foxglove root, wolfberry fruit, dogwood fruit, achyranthes root, bighead attractylodes rhizome, hardy rubber-tree bark, cinnamon bark, poor-man's ginseng, moneywort and climbing fern spores for oral administration to boost chi, bolster the kidney, relieve painful urination and expel the stones.

Tips to prevent stones

1. Drink more water. Drinking large amount of water is the most important step to prevent stone formation. Three liters of water on a daily basis is the recommended amount to prevent kidney stones. This might mean more trips to the bathroom.

2. Avoid caffeinated drinks. Cola, tea and coffee work as diuretics and cause you to pass fluid at a quicker pace. When you expel fluid too frequently, it does not get the chance to wash out any stone-forming substances.

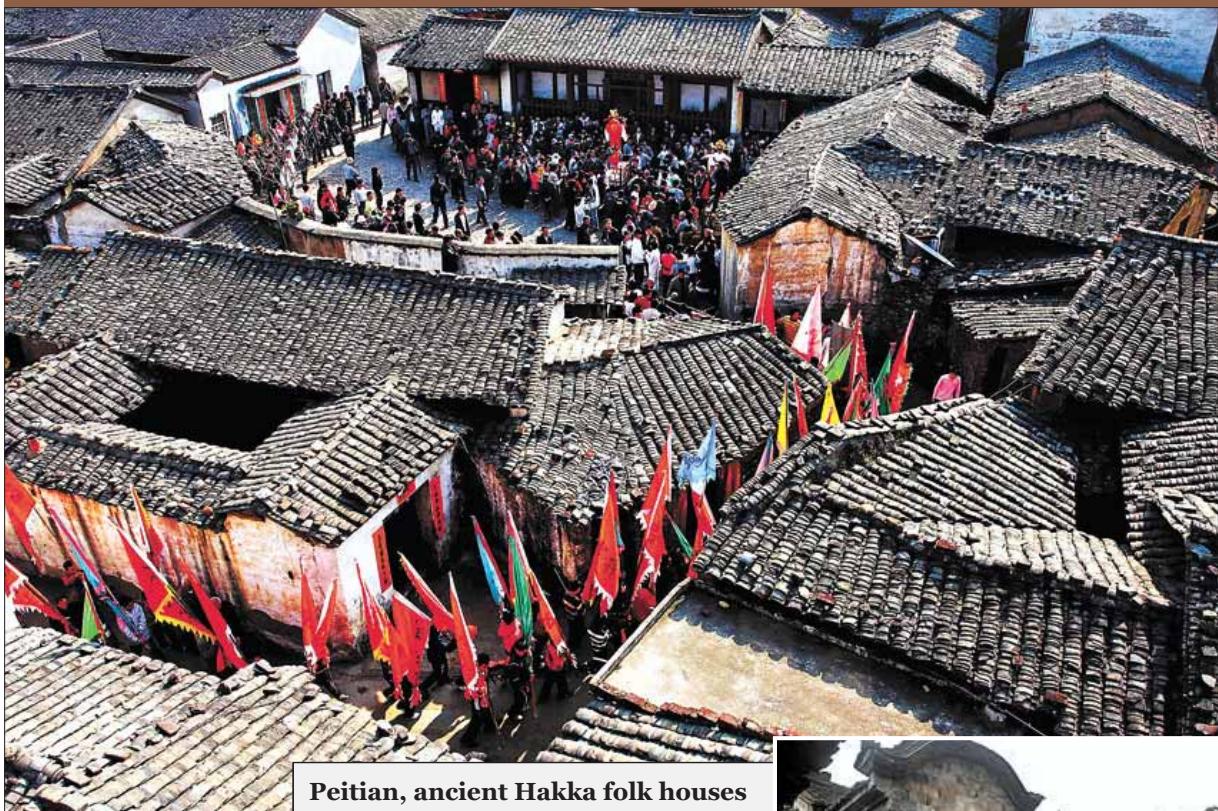
3. Adjust your diet. Eat more oat bran, beans, whole wheat breads, wheat cereals, cabbage and carrots and less beef, pork and poultry. Avoid foods that are high in oxalates, such as dark green vegetables, nuts and chocolate, and use little salt when cooking.

Feel the past in Liancheng

By Zhang Dongya

Liancheng, a small western county in Fujian Province dating back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279), has many preserved ancient and historical gems, including a picturesque village called Peitian – where everyone has the family name Wu – that might be China's Xanadu.

Close to Peitian is the town of Luofang, where you'll find four rare covered bridges and the ancient zougushi – a Lantern Festival parade that originated during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). Visitors touring Liancheng will feel imbued in folk traditions and the old culture of southern China.



Locals hold ancient zougushi every Lantern Festival, which lightens up the old village.

Peitian, ancient Hakka folk houses

Located deep in the mountains of western Fujian Province, Peitian Village is famous for a cluster of ancient buildings of Hakka people built during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) dynasties.

As opposed to the round-shaped *tulou* of the Hakka in Yongding County, the houses in Peitian are open with peaked roofs. There are 30 grand mansions, 20 ancient ancestral shrines, five old Chinese schools, two memorial archways and a one-kilometer street. This well-preserved complex was once dubbed one of the 10 most beautiful villages and towns in China.

The ancient street was called Xucai Street in olden times because the word is the name of an examination given in a building on the street.

The buildings feature an exterior of cyan bricks and wooden structures inside. The gates are packed with clay sculptures and stone carvings, while the ridges of the houses are decorated with painted pottery. Old wine and teashops still keep the flags and signboards of the past.

Houses include the Scholar-Bureaucrat Residence, Yanqing (Inheriting) Hall and Official Hall. The Official Hall is thus named because that's where the Wu family received officials.

One of the unique features of the folk houses is cobblestone patterns on the ground. The most common pattern is one of an ancient coin, which is seen in both grand houses and small yards. It reflects the local emphasis on commerce in addition to farming. Other patterns include a knot, kylin and the Eight Diagrams of Taoism.

Southern Mountain School, which was built 500 years ago and used by more than 100 scholars, is one of the ancient schools in the village. There is another school nearby that was built especially for women.

Peitian people valued gate design much more than the interior. Locals say that 70 percent of a building's worth depends on the beauty of its gate. As a result, ancient shrines will always have big, elaborate gates with beautiful carvings and engravings.

In ancient times, Peitian served as a transfer station for daily commodities such as bamboo, wood, paper, salt and oil. It now attracts flocks of tourists, which has made the small village bustling again.



Peitian Village is famous for a cluster of Ming and Qing buildings of Hakka people. Locals highly value the construction of gates.

CFP Photos



On ancient Xucai Street are old houses and shops with an exterior of cyan bricks and wooden structures inside.

Continued on page 21...



The second day of zougushi parade is always held in the water. Yunlong Covered Bridge is a popular place for villagers in Xialuo Village of Liancheng.

CFP Photo

... continued from page 20



Yunlong Covered Bridge

Photos by Idsh

Four ancient covered bridges

A must-see of Liancheng County is the ancient covered bridges. In China, covered bridges, or langqiao, are mostly found in Zhejiang, Guizhou and Fujian provinces. The bridges in Liancheng are typical wooden ones. With enclosed sides and a roof, they are also called house bridges or wind-and-rain bridges.

Yunlong Covered Bridge, located at the mouth of a river in Xialuo Village in Luofang, is the most splendid of these bridges. Constructed in 1643, it

was restored during the Qianlong period of Qing (1644-1912).

One end of the bridge was built on the cliff, with piers of granite, a dark-red body and a wooden roof. It is five meters wide, which is enough for horse carriages to pass through. There are bronze bells, which jingle in the wind, hanging on the archways.

Yunlong is also well known for the zougushi, a parade in which marchers reenact ancient stories.

Usually held during the Lantern Festival in the first month of the

Chinese lunar calendar, there are always two parades: one held in the village on the eve of the Lantern Festival, and another held in the water the next day. The latter, which is more fun to watch, features villagers running into the water with litters on their shoulders.

In the village parade, children dress in opera costumes and act out plots of ancient tales. They will stand on painted litters that are also part of the story. A troupe of 22 young men will parade with the litters.



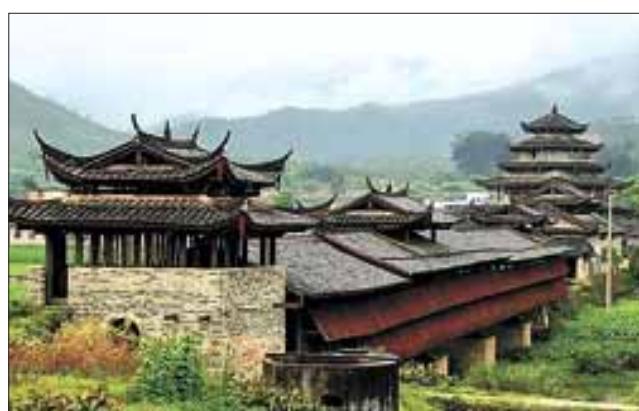
Travel information

Getting there: Liancheng is affiliated with Longyan, Fujian Province. You can take train K571 directly to Longyan, then transfer to Liancheng County. A bus (25 yuan) from Longyan to Peitian Village will take two and a half hours.

Admission to Peitian Village: 20 yuan

Accommodations: Liancheng County has hotels of different rankings; you can also lodge in Peitian Village's well-preserved Wu's Courtyard.

Local specialties include Hakka rice wine, stuffed tofu and taro dumplings.



The oldest bridge is the 600-year-old Yonglong, built in the shape of an inverted triangle in 1377 during Ming. Close to the bridge are Qing Wenchang Pavilion and Tianhou Temple, built with simple, elegant designs.

Dining

Superfood

Westin is creating the first SuperFoods-focused hotel restaurant menu. Its SuperFoods breakfast offers health-enhancing items rich in antioxidants and phytonutrients. The SuperFoodsRx philosophy is based on the concept of food synergy. The new dishes will help rejuvenate Westin's guests and support the hotel's ongoing commitment to personal renewal.

Where: The Westin Beijing Chaoyang, 1 Xinyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5922 8888



Craving an international buffet?

Cafe Noir has an extensive selection of Southeast Asian and international fare like spaghetti, sushi, sashimi and fresh salads, and desserts like mousse cake, tiramisu and Movenpick ice cream. Now it is supplementing its 118-yuan Weekend Buffet Brunch with free soft drinks.

Where: Cafe Noir, 2 Dongsihuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am - 2:30 pm
Tel: 5907 8416

Mid-Autumn mooncakes

Find the perfect gift for family, friends and colleagues with a box of luxurious mooncakes from the Kempinski Hotel Beijing. Mid-Autumn Festival is celebrated on the 15th day of the eighth month of the lunar calendar, when the moon is at its fullest. Kempinski's mooncakes come with gourmet fillings such as lotus seed, egg yolk and five-seed, as well as with more innovative fillings like blueberry, green tea and royal milk.

Where: Kempinski Hotel Beijing, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
Cost: 198 yuan (Imperial Mooncake), 428 yuan (Imperial Deluxe Mooncake), 468 yuan (Grand Imperial Mooncake), 20 yuan (Single Mooncake)
Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 4200

Seafood carnival

Come to Elements on Friday night and dive head first into the capital's freshest seafood. Enjoy a sumptuous array of king crabs, freshly shucked oysters, lobsters, caviar, prawns and salmon. Bring in your fresh catch to have it topped with homemade condiments, steamed, fried or roasted at one of Elements' live cooking stations.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Fridays, 6-10 pm
Cost: 328 yuan with tea, coffee, soft drinks, local beer and wine (15 percent surcharge)
Tel: 5865 5020

Continental Airlines offers flat-bed seats to China

For the fifth anniversary of its Beijing-New York route, Continental Airlines is introducing new Business First flat-bed seats on its China flights. The airline was the first in the US to launch daily nonstop routes between Beijing and New York in June, 2005.

Since then, Continental has expanded its China service with a daily

flight between Shanghai and New York in 2009, and with scheduled charter flights during the 2010 Spring Festival. Continental also operates daily nonstop service between Hong Kong and New York and also reinstated its twice-weekly Hong Kong to Guam route on April 2.

The airline's Business First service

has been praised by many Chinese customers, and it is working constantly to upgrade its services with state-of-the-art in-flight entertainment system on all of its Boeing 777 aircraft.

Its latest addition of Business First flat-bed seats allow passengers to lie completely flat with 2 meters of sleeping space in the fully extended

position. Electronic controls enable customers to easily add lumbar support and other extended sleep positions. Outlets on the seats provide power to laptops and offer headsets and USB plugs for iPod connectivity. All business seats are equipped with 15.4-inch video monitors.

(By Sun Feng)

Hotel

Hilton opens luxury airport hotel

Hilton Hotels is opening China's first luxury airport hotel. The grand opening of Hilton Beijing Capital Airport hotel and conference facility comes on the two-year anniversary of the opening of Terminal 3.

The hotel in the terminal has 320 guest rooms, seven restaurants and bars, 32 private dining rooms, two ballrooms and 21 meeting rooms. Guests can enjoy the executive concierge service, a luxury spa and a state-of-the-art fitness center.

Marco Polo gets new food, beverage director

Tony Shi is the new director of Food and Beverages at the 315-room Marco Polo Parkside Beijing. The 10-year veteran of hospitality management was most recently the banquet service and stewarding manager of the Park Hyatt Beijing.

Shi will oversee culinary operations at the hotel's banquet spaces and at a myriad of lounge and other dining options. Shi's appointment comes at a time when Marco Polo Parkside, Beijing is featuring a series of new food and beverage developments, giving guests a constant variety of dining options.

Event



ROOMbeijing welcomes Kevin Garnett

Renowned NBA star Kevin Garnett dined at ROOMbeijing on August 1 and spent the evening with guests at one of the hotel's monthly Intimate Sessions. ROOMbeijing welcomed Garnett with traditional performances that incorporated basketball, face changing, kung fu, acrobatics and tea ceremonies.

Later in the evening, DJ WORDY, the only three-time winner of the China DMC Champion, spun tracks for the after party. Garnett went to the bar to take photographs with his fans and sign autographs.

Aviation

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

English lessons abroad

By Wang Yu

People think it's faster learning a foreign language if you're living in that country. But as far as I'm concerned, where you live doesn't matter when you isolate yourself from a particular place's culture.

My aunt lived in Los Angeles for more than 10 years but she still cannot speak English fluently. Two years ago, she sold her spin in the US and returned to China.

I was always curious how a woman who did not speak English could run a business for so many years. The answer is simple – she lived in a Chinese community. If she needed to deal with Americans, variations of basic sentences could be repeated.

This isn't just happening within the middle-aged Chinese population. When I was on vacation in England, I saw some Chinese students who rarely got out of their comfort zones. Their English actually got worse – or at least improved at a slower rate than when they were in China.

One day we held a dinner party in the public kitchen of a dormitory. I lived with my friend Amy, who was studying there, and got to know many Chinese students in the school. After finishing dinner, we played mafia. A German student named Alex joined us. To make it easier for him, all of the Chinese students spoke English.

"Well, I think this lady-killer should be Chris. What he said in the last two rounds was quite contradictory," Alex said.

He pointed at Chris Liu, who was sitting opposite to him. During the game, there is an anonymous "killer" who sits in the crowd that people have to ferret out. Every round the "judge" asks people to close their eyes and let the killer select someone to kill. The mission is to find the killer before everyone "dies."

"You say it's a lady killer, but I'm not a lady," Liu said.

"Ah... by lady-killer, I mean someone who kills ladies. You see, only girls have been kicked out so far," Alex explained.

"Basic knowledge, isn't it?" Amy said to me quietly.

The language deficiencies of the Chinese students really became obvious. They had lived in England for two years, but their unwillingness to assimilate to local life really hurt them.

"Actually, the first few months are hard for everyone because you find that all you've learned at school is useless," Amy said. "But I soon started to take it as a good opportunity – if you are in Britain, try to live a British lifestyle.

Watch TV, go to the streets, find a part-time job – they all help to improve one's English."

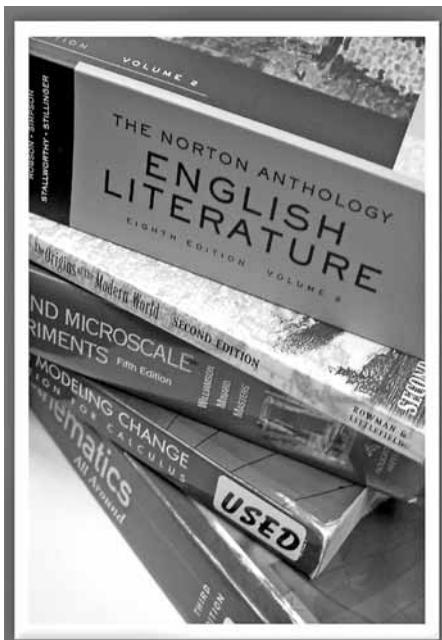
"Yes, I agree. Is there anything you can tell me now?" I said.

"You've gone bonkers, mate!"

"What? Bankers?"

"No, bonkers. It's English slang that means you're crazy. I heard it first from a local boy when I was working in McDonald's. Then I found on the Internet it first appeared in the early 20th century, meaning 'light-headed, giddy' or 'slightly drunk,' used by the British navy."

I kept that in mind. It turns out that talking to locals really will teach you more than any book.

**Chinglish on the way**

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Get an Electric Shock Carefully

By Terry-Boyd Zhang

When first learning Chinese, at least for me, there seemed to be many words that were repetitive or unnecessary. Knowing more now, I appreciate the clarity and consideration that these words bring to everyday life. Take this sign for example: Get an electric shock carefully. It is a kind and gentle person who posted this sign for your benefit. Getting an electric shock is not something to be taken lightly. My dad used to have a Taser-like object for getting livestock onto the truck and, boy, you didn't want to be swinging that thing around carelessly! (Barbaric, you say? He had one; I don't recall him ever using it on the animals.)

Also, wrapping your car around a hydro-pole in the middle of a downpour or bathing with your laptop are both bad ideas – not "careful" at all. It's kind of like "Run slowly!" If you do want to electrocute yourself, you had best do it carefully. Better yet, you should be careful, that's for sure, and know that the box or the building where this sign was spotted probably contains dangerous high-voltage electrical equipment that will burn you to a crisp if you insist on opening the box or playing in the building. Rather



than frying yourself, leave any fixing of the wires to professional electricians. Smartest to stay away.

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. When viewed it from the hillside, Baihua Mountain is shrouded in clouds.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): When one of my students wrote this sentence and I deleted "it," she was puzzled and could not understand why I would do that. She thought that sentence was perfectly correct. The problem with this sentence is the inconsistency of the subject of the main clause with that of the subordinate clause. Obviously, the writer wishes to say: When it is viewed from the hillside, Baihua Mountain is shrouded in clouds. As the subject and the predicate of the subordinate clause can be omitted, it becomes: When viewed from the hillside, Baihua Mountain is shrouded in clouds. Or you may say: When you view it from the hillside, Baihua Mountain is shrouded in clouds.

Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ): Another way, especially in very formal academic papers, is to change the "you" to "one": When one views it from the hillside, the mountain is shrouded in clouds. This can become a bit awkward, so simply removing the "it" is the best solution.

2. With tour of a series of five cities in China, her second last stop is Beijing.

ZS: The rendering of "second last" is, as a matter of fact, all right. However, the more standard way of expressing this idea is "the last but one" or "the penultimate," which both mean "next to last." We have: the penultimate chapter of a book, the penultimate stop; the second page but one. So, this sentence can just as well be written this way: With a tour of a series of five cities in China, her last stop but one is Beijing, or, her penultimate stop is Beijing. I have an example on hand to show the usage of the word penultimate: The runner swung into a terrific bare-footed spurt in the penultimate lap and romped to a record-breaking victory in the men's 10,000-meter race.

TBZ: I personally kind of like "second last" stop. Though, in the example, I might add "her second last planned stop" is Beijing, because the sentence is in the present tense and a lot can happen in the three cities prior to Beijing. In fact, I would make Beijing the last stop on the tour, but that's changing everything completely, isn't it?

3. Sneaker

ZS: Nowadays we are fairly used to the word "sneaker" as meaning a light canvas shoe with a soft rubber sole used for games and sports and don't think of it as meaning "a person who sneaks." However, here's an interesting corporate story from Keds, a sneaker company: "The term was coined in 1917 by Henry Nelson McKinney, an agent for the advertising firm N.W. Ayer & Son, referring to their soft, noiseless rubber soles, which allow the wearer to 'sneak' up on unsuspecting friends or family." The term, however, is found as early as 1887 when *The Boston Journal of Education* reported, "It is only the harassed schoolmaster who can fully appreciate the pertinency of the name boys give to tennis shoes – sneakers." So, the word was coined much earlier and very vividly brings into relief its character of softness and lightness as a sports shoe.

TBZ: This is really interesting! So, "sneakers" is generally an American term. In Canada, we normally say "running shoes" or perhaps call them by the brand, such as Converse.



Cemetery Junction (2010)

Movie of the week

Like many British movies, Cemetery Junction is simple, beautiful and leaves the audience wanting to watch it again. Free of Hollywood's fancy visual effects, this movie wins on its story.

It somehow manages to portray the muted misery of life in the UK, and the unfocused, desperate yearning to escape that comes with it, without giving the viewer an overdose of angst or hope. The deeper message is one both profound and bittersweet that celebrates the cathartic release that comes with acceptance.

It's great to watch on your own when life has got you down.

Scene 1

(Freddie meets his boss Kendrick at the insurance company.)

Mr. Kendrick (K): Fredrick Taylor. Freddie Taylor.

Freddie (F): Yes, sir.

K: Welcome to Vigilant Life Assurance. I see that you grew up in Cemetery Junction. Went to Stonemead, the worst school in the south of England. They expect you to leave at 14 with no qualifications and go directly to the **scrapheap** (1) of life.

Does this sound about right?

F: I suppose so, sir.

K: Well, I know so because I grew up in Cemetery Junction and I went to that school.

F: I knew that. It's one of the reasons I wanted to work for you.

K: Mike Ramsay is gonna be supervising. You got anything to add, Mike?

Mike Ramsay (M): When selling life assurance, you want the stench of death in their nostrils. Talking to the husband, you want the missus thinking: "Crumbs, chief. What's my life gonna be like when he **pegs** (2) it?" Men work, women worry. That's what you rely on.

Don't look at Mr. Kendrick. He didn't hear that, and I didn't say it. Do you understand?

F: Yes, sir.

M: Lovely. Over to you, sir.

F: You're a bit of an inspiration to me. I know that you got out of the old neighborhood. I know that you've got a Rolls-Royce parked in your own parking space.

And I know that you own a mansion worth 40,000 pounds.

K: Forty-two thousand pounds.

F: That's what I want, sir. I don't want to end up like my dad. Coming home aching, with grease on my hands and nothing to show for it.

K: Good.

Scene 2

(It turns out that Julie, Kendrick's daughter, used to be a friend of Freddie when they were kids. She is now Mike's fiancee.)

Julie (J): Do you wanna travel?

F: Yeah. Yeah, obviously, yeah.

J: Where do you wanna go?

F: I've always wanted to go to Cornwall.

J: Cornwall?

F: Yeah.

J: Oh, well, Cornwall's a good start, but there're so many amazing places. Look how tiny England is. France is only five hours away. We could leave now, and by six o'clock, we'd be in Paris eating escargot.

F: Sounds nice. As long as they don't try and sneak in any snails. They eat them, don't they, over there?

J: Yeah, they do.

F: They eat weird food, the French.

J: No. French food's supposed to be the best.

(Freddie reads National Geographic magazine.)

F: Hey, there's a woman here with her knockers out. God, they're **all at it** (3).

Synopsis

In 1970s England, three blue-collar friends spend their days joking, drinking, fighting and chasing girls. Freddie wants to leave their working-class world but the cool, charismatic Bruce and lovable loser Snork are happy with life as it is.

When Freddie gets a new job as a door-to-door salesman and bumps into his old school sweetheart Julie, the gang is forced to make choices that will change their lives forever.

J: That's my ambition, to take pictures like those.

F: What, porno?

J: That's *National Geographic*. I wanna travel, see other cultures, have my own photos in a magazine like that.

F: Good luck with that.

J: What's wrong with that?

F: People from around here don't do stuff like that.

J: Someone's gotta take these pictures, why not me?

F: Don't know. It's just not how it works.

J: Well, what do you wanna do?

F: Work, get married, the usual.

J: Is that really what you wanna do? Get married and die? At the funeral, all they say is: "He supported Reading Football Club and liked onions."

F: I don't know.

Scene 3

(Freddie tries to persuade Julie to skip town with him to travel the world.)

F: Come with me.

J: Freddie.

F: Why can't you come?

J: You know why.

F: Come on, you don't wanna marry him.

J: Freddie.

F: You started all this. Made me wanna go, told me not to waste my life. Why waste yours?

J: You should go now.

F: You can see it. Mike's like your dad. You're gonna end up like your mom. She's

had the life **sucked out of** (4) her. They'll suck the life out of you.

J: Get out. You can't insult my mother and expect me to run away with you.

F: I think she's wonderful. That's my point. She's like a ghost. Your father doesn't even say thank you when she gives him tea.

J: What?

F: Haven't you seen it? She puts a cup of tea down, he doesn't say thank you. He doesn't even see her. When did he stop saying thank you? When did he stop noticing her? And Mike's just the same. He's just the same. You don't wanna spend your life with him.

J: You haven't seen me in 10 years. You don't know Mike or my family. Who the hell do you think you are?

F: OK, you're right. I'm sorry, you're right. But you have to come with me.

J: Why?

F: Because I think I might be in love with you.

J: Oh, for God's sake. I have to come because you think you might be in love with me? Get out.

Vocabulary

1. scrapheap: a place for discarding useless or worthless material

2. peg: in British slang, it means to die

3. all at it: here it means all do the same

4. suck out: be drawn away

(By Wang Yu)